



# Customer Pipeline

Emerald Coast Utilities Authority

## November 15: Sewer Averaging Begins

If you are an ECUA mainland residential wastewater customer, your annual sewer charges are based on the average number of gallons of water used\* in your household during the period known as “sewer averaging.” Sewer averaging, or Winter Quarter Averaging as it is called in some communities, is usually conducted during the winter months when residential water consumption is at its lowest.

**The ECUA’s sewer averaging period will begin with each residential customer’s first meter reading on or after November 15 (including ECUA sewer customers whose water service is from another water provider). The length of your sewer averaging period is 90 days.**



**WATER WASTED DUE TO LEAKS WILL AFFECT YOUR MONTHLY WATER AND SEWER CHARGES.**

Since your actual water consumption during this period will determine your sewer charge for the next twelve months, it is important to check all indoor and outdoor plumbing fixtures for leaks. Water wasted due to leaks will affect your monthly water and sewer charges. Most leaks are easy to identify but sometimes, it takes a little creativity to track them down.

You can confirm a suspected leak in your toilet’s plumbing by putting several drops of food coloring in your toilet tank. Wait 15 minutes, and if the colored water shows up in the bowl, there is a leak in the tank. Check the toilet’s stopper ball for wear by flushing the toilet and rubbing the bottom of the stopper with your finger. If the rubber rubs off or crumbles, it is time to replace the stopper. Finally, **you need to lubricate, adjust or replace the flush handle if you have to jiggle it to stop the water from running after you flush.** The “stuck” handle may be causing the stopper to stay open, allowing water to flow into the bowl. Check out more ways to save on your water and sewer bill in the right-hand side bar on this page.

\*Note: If you have a separate irrigation meter, the water used through the irrigation meter is not included in the sewer averaging calculation

## Reduce Water Usage: Save, Save, Save

Here are some other ideas to keep in mind for reducing water usage during the sewer averaging period and throughout the year:

- Water the lawn and garden only when necessary. In order to moderate some of the extreme peaks in usage, and to maintain a balanced system pressure and reduce the amount of wear on our pumping equipment, ECUA recommends that our customers irrigate between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m., which is our optimum off-peak time.
- Make sure that outside spigots are not forgotten in the “on” position.
- Cut down on the frequency of at-home car washing, or use a commercial car wash.
- Make sure you have a full load before running the washer or dishwasher.
- Don’t let the water run while you brush your teeth or shave.

Hopefully, following some of these simple steps will help you save money and conserve water too! For other conservation tips, check out the “Live Green” tab on the ECUA website.

## Do you occasionally see garbage flying out from the top of garbage or recycling trucks and ending up as litter on our streets? Here's what you can do to help prevent this inadvertent littering:

Light-weight materials such as foam-type packing "peanuts", paper, plastic bags, etc., may fly off the garbage truck, causing litter on the street if they are not properly contained. In fact, any materials in the truck, whether they are recyclables or garbage, can potentially fly out of the truck if the items are not well contained or if the truck is very full.

**It is very important to bag all your garbage materials securely**, enclosing them in a plastic trash bag. While plastic shopping bags alone are not accepted in the recycling program, you can reuse them by placing your garbage or recyclables in them prior to disposal. If we all strive to securely place garbage and recyclables in their respective containers, they will remain in the trucks instead of littering our roadways.

### What does ECUA do to prevent fly-away litter?

Sadly, we are not alone in this predicament – windblown debris is one of the biggest problems throughout the waste collection industry. While the ECUA is not the sole source of fly-away litter in our community, we take this matter very seriously and make every effort to reduce the release of litter from our vehicles – those over which we have control.



Some roadways are particularly problematic, because they are routes used by all of the sanitation collection providers' garbage trucks to transport trash to the Perdido Landfill on Beulah Road. The ECUA has taken several steps to try to reduce the amount of litter that escapes from our trucks. Our drivers do everything possible to prevent litter. We ask the driver to secure the truck and load as much as possible prior to leaving the route and heading to the landfill. In some cases, the driver may not be able to see the litter coming from the body due to the design of the trucks.

We have evaluated multiple truck designs and found none that totally eliminate the problem. We selected a body style that was better than most and asked the manufacturer to make modifications to further reduce the amount of litter. Production issues prohibited the manufacturer from assisting in this regard, so ECUA is making the truck modifications in-house. This involves welding additional caging to the opening of the truck body to reduce windblown debris. Due to the design of the automated arms on the collection trucks, it is virtually impossible to eliminate all litter.

Finally, ECUA began our "Gone with the Wind - Bag your Bags" public education campaign in 2008, reminding customers to bag their garbage and recyclables before placing them in the automated collection cans. Bagging these materials helps reduce the amount of litter by containing the plastic bags and other light-weight items that make up the bulk of the litter from the garbage trucks. We will continue these education efforts and ask our customers to help us prevent litter.

