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**LCA Customer Newsletter**

**July - September 2023**

**STATEWIDE DROUGHT WATCH:** On June 15, 2023, PA DEP declared a drought watch for the entire state of Pennsylvania. LCA requests all customers voluntarily reduce water use by 5-10%. LCA continuously monitors local water supplies and updated messages will be provided as conditions change. Visit our website to learn more at [www.lehighcountyauthority.org](http://www.lehighcountyauthority.org). Search **CONSERVE**.

## **All about Service Line Leaks - Who owns what, and what to do when leaks happen!**

**ABOUT UTILITY SERVICE LINES:** When leaks happen it is important to know who owns what. A water service line is the pipe connecting your home to the public water main that runs underground, usually under the street in front of your home. According to the LCA's Rules and Regulations, the property owner is responsible for maintenance and repairs to the portion of the service line that runs from the "curb box" into the property. A "curb box" is the housing for the valve that turns water on or off to your property and is often located in the right-of-way near the curb or in your sidewalk. Customers are responsible for the water service line that runs underground from that valve into the home.

**HOW WILL I KNOW IF THERE IS A LEAK?** Water service line leaks sometimes show up in your yard in the form of a puddle. If you see a puddle, or perhaps water on a sidewalk or roadway when it has not rained, it's time to check it out. If you don't see water surfacing, but have reduced water pressure or brown water, that could also mean you have a leak. Sometimes LCA crews spot service line leaks during routine maintenance or other work. When that happens, we contact the property owner and schedule a pressure test. When leaks are severe and there is potential for property damage, your water may be shut off to protect impacted properties until repairs are made.

**CAUSES OF SERVICE LINE LEAKS:** Service line leaks may be caused by the age or material of the pipe, digging or accidental damage to a pipe, and even tree root growth. One way to prevent damage is to call PA One Call (8-1-1), a free service to have utilities marked before digging on your property.

**ARE SERVICE LINE LEAKS COVERED BY INSURANCE?** LCA does not offer service line coverage directly, but some insurance companies offer coverage for underground utilities, such as water, sewer, or electrical service lines. There are also companies that specialize in home warranty-type coverages for the various types of utility lines that connect to your home. It is a good idea to check with your insurance company to find out if utility lines are covered. If not, you may want to research potential costs for repairs or replacement and check out coverage options.

**WHEN LEAKS HAPPEN:** If you suspect you have a service line leak, call a plumber for evaluation and repairs. If necessary, LCA will stop water service to your home during repairs. Give us a call to schedule a water shut-off, and we'll come back to restore service and perform a pressure test when repairs are complete. **\*IMPORTANT:** Private plumbers are not permitted to operate LCA valves, including the one in the curb box in front of your home.

If you think you have a leak or see water in the road where it should not be, call LCA. Quick action can prevent damage, insurance claims, and extra expenses! **Visit our website under the Customer Service tab for tips, tricks, and service responsibilities.**

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN LCA ASKS CUSTOMERS TO CONSERVE WATER?

LCA may request that customers conserve water when there is maintenance work on a water storage tank or other work required that does not involve a complete shutdown of water service, but conservation will be helpful. We will also ask customers to conserve water if there is a drought declaration in our service areas. Limiting continuous water use activities can help LCA manage water supply, pressure, and service interruptions.

LCA will typically request that customers conserve water until we provide notice that conservation is no longer needed.

## SAVING WATER IN THE BATHROOM

### Check your toilets for leaks.

Place a few drops of food coloring in your toilet tank (behind the toilet). If the colored water seeps into the bowl after 10-15 minutes, you have a leak that should be repaired immediately.

### Consider a water-saving toilet.

While a conventional toilet uses 5 to 7 gallons per flush, water-saving toilets use just 3 gallons or less per flush. They are now widely available and are even required in all new home construction and renovation. When you're shopping for water-saving fixtures, look for the **EPA WaterSense label**, which indicates they are certified to save.

If you have an older toilet and don't want to replace it with a water-saving toilet, consider placing a bottle filled with sand or pebbles in the tank behind the toilet bowl. Place the bottle away from any moving mechanism inside the tank. This will displace a certain amount of water in the tank and will save water with each flush.

### Take short showers and shallow baths.

Long, hot showers can waste 5 to 10 gallons every extra minute. And don't forget the additional cost of heating all that water! Save water by taking short showers instead of filling a bathtub and consider installing a low-flow shower head.

### Install water-saving showerheads or flow restrictors.

Your local hardware or plumbing supply store stocks inexpensive water-saving showerheads or restrictors that are easy to install. A low-flow showerhead uses only 2 to 3 gallons of water per minute.

### Turn the water off while brushing your teeth and shaving.

Many gallons can be lost if you allow the water to continue running.

## APPLIANCES THAT USE WATER

### If you have a dishwasher, only use when you have a full load.

A dishwasher can use 15 – 30 gallons per load. But if used properly, a dishwasher can use less water than if you were to wash all your dishes by hand. Run the dishwasher only when it's completely full.

### Only wash full loads of laundry.

A washing machine uses 25 – 40 gallons per load, so don't waste water on a small load of laundry. Also, if you're replacing a washer, consider buying a front-loading machine, which will typically use less water than a top-loading model.

### Check pipes and faucets for leaks and save money!



Even the smallest drip from a worn washer can waste 20 or more gallons a day. Larger leaks can waste hundreds, which adds up on your bill!

### *Conserving water is always a good idea!*

Learn more ways to conserve water on our website under the Customer Service tab.

[www.lehighcountyauthority.org](http://www.lehighcountyauthority.org)