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 Monday- Friday, 8:15a.m.-4:45p.m. \* [www.lehighcountyauthority.org](http://www.lehighcountyauthority.org)

**LCA Customer Newsletter** **October - December 2023**

**2024 RATE CHANGES:** Lehigh County Authority’s 2024 proposed water and sewer rates have been published on our website for review and public comment. View rate information at [lehighcountyauthority.org/2024-rates](http://lehighcountyauthority.org/2024-rates).

Did you know that LCA is a nonprofit organization, and 100% of your bill is used to support the operation and maintenance of the water and sewer system? This includes paying for major system upgrades and replacement of aging pipes, pumps, and treatment equipment – all very important upgrades to protect public health and the environment and provide reliable service to our customers!

**Understanding Estimated vs. Actual Bills**

Lehigh County Authority currently uses a “drive-by” system to capture customers’ water meter readings. As our technician drives by your property, the system “pings” your water meter to request a meter reading. Sometimes we are unable to obtain an actual meter reading, which may be due to a physical barrier such as excessive snow or overgrown shrubbery, or it could be another meter-related issue. When this happens, your bill will be estimated until we can determine the source of the problem and an actual meter reading obtained.

If your bill is estimated, you will see “ESTIMATE” or “E” under the **Meter Readings Type** on your bill, as shown on the example below. The estimate is based on your prior use history. Once the problem is corrected and an actual read is obtained, your bill will be adjusted to reflect your actual water usage.

CURRENT METER INFORMATION						
Service Dates		Meter Readings			Volume (Gallons)	Billed Usage (Gallons)
From	To	Previous	Current	Type		
06/01/2023	09/01/2023	1,461,000	1,480,000	ESTIMATE	19,000	19,000

**Your Water Consumption History**

The job of the water meter is to record how much water (in gallons) you use, or consumption, which affects your water and sewer bill. You can monitor your usage by reviewing the “Consumption History” section of your water bill. If consumption changes a lot from one quarter to the next, you may have a usage change, or a leak, and it is time to investigate. In the example shown here, the customer has used less water, which means a lower bill.

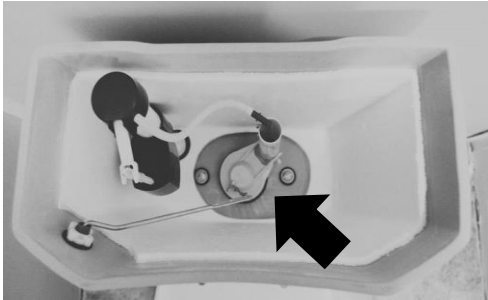
CONSUMPTION HISTORY			
<u>06/01/2023</u>	<u>03/01/2023</u>	<u>12/02/2022</u>	<u>09/01/2022</u>
21,000	23,000	24,000	23,000

When you have questions about your bill, contact our Customer Care Team. We’re happy to help!

## Common Service Issues

Let's face it – water and sewer issues happen! When they do, you can find answers on the Common Service Issues page on our website, [www.lehighcountyauthority.org](http://www.lehighcountyauthority.org). We built the page based on the most frequent issues and questions we receive from our customers. On the page you can find out about things like responsibilities for water service lines, how to find and fix leaks, what to know if you have a sudden high bill or a sewer backup, and more.

Our high bill troubleshooting guide, which you can find on the page, will help you understand what to look for if you have a sudden spike in consumption showing on the bill. The guide explains how to read your water meter and see if it moves even when water is off throughout the home.



One of the most common culprits and leaks not always heard is the leaky toilet flapper in the tank, which can leak water 24/7 or intermittently (see the arrow on the image to the left). The flapper may seal okay on one flush, but not tightly on the next. We developed a short “how to” video demonstrating how to do a dye test on your toilets to find out if a flapper needs flipping. Find it on the Common Service Issues page.

Rubber toilet flappers, like the sample shown here, deteriorate over time and water can seep through at all hours of the day. Silent toilet leaks can add a lot to your water bill. They are inexpensive to replace and something you can do yourself. It's a good idea to dye test toilets at least 2 times per year.



## Tips to Prepare Your Home for Colder Weather

It's hard to believe it is time again for our annual reminder to protect your water pipes and meter from the cold. Soon temperatures will drop and if your pipes are in a cold, uninsulated basement, they are subject to freezing. When pipes freeze and break it will result in a leak when thawed and could cost you thousands of dollars in damages and lost personal property.

We have a video on our Common Service Issues webpage showing how to insulate pipes and the water meter in your home with items you have around the house. There are also products specially made to wrap pipes and your water meter, which you can find at most home improvement or hardware stores. Many online shops will also ship them straight to your door.

Some household items you can use to insulate your pipes and water meter include old t-shirts, sheets, rags, or towels, heavy tape, and smaller diameter swimming pool noodles. Wrap the t-shirts, sheets, rags, or towels around the pipes and water meter and then wrap them with tape to hold them in place. Newspapers also work well as insulation. Carefully cut a slit in one side of a pool noodle, open it carefully and place it on the pipes, then wrap with tape to hold it in place. The goal is to keep cold air out.



Although LCA owns the water meter, it is up to you to keep it protected from damage, including freezing. A water meter that freezes could mean you wake up to no water and then must make a service call for a replacement meter once it thaws out. Once the meter has frozen there is no question freezing caused the damage because the metal frost plate on the bottom will have burst open, which it is designed to do. A leaking meter could cause additional damage in your home.

Take steps now to prepare and protect your home from the cold!