



THE LAWRENCE LIFT NEWSLETTER

ONLINE BILL PAY COMING SOON



Keep an eye out for a soon-coming mailer from the Utility providing details concerning the rollout of the new on-line billing and payment options that are coming as well as a downloadable app (Eye On Water) that allows customers to monitor water usage and consumption on their mobile device as well as set parameters to provide timely notification of possible leaks on the plumbing after the meter. We are excited to be in a position now to provide these much-desired customer-service enhancements to our valued customers. We appreciate your continued patience as we make these changes.

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DEAR LAWRENCE UTILITY CUSTOMER,

Have you checked the visible portions of your house or business plumbing for leaks and proper function of valves and water using appliances such as water softeners and automatic humidifiers? This is a good habit to get into to avoid those surprises on your water bill. Also keep an eye on those water-backup sump pump systems. We have seen these things fail and drive up customer water bills. What about the lid on the sewer cleanout access outside your home (provided you have a cleanout; some older homes do not). In newer homes or older homes that have had sewer line repair work performed, the cleanout is typically a PVC pipe with a removable lid that screws on/off. If these lids are missing there is the possibility of debris entering your sewer line and causing problems, not to mention the introduction of rain/surface water runoff that we needlessly pay to treat. Speaking of paying CEG to treat sewage, do you know if your sump pump is discharging outside into a storm sewer or other drainage feature? Or is it connected to your sanitary sewer service line? If it is connected to the sewer line, that additional "clear water" discharge ends up going to the treatment plant, driving up our monthly flow volumes resulting in higher treatment costs to treat water that is already "clean". Together we can get a handle on this problem and work towards significantly reducing sewage treatment costs as well as assuring that needed capacity for current and anticipated sewage flow and volume is maintained in the system. While the Utility continues to perform sanitary sewer infrastructure improvements, it is also necessary for property owners to do their part to ensure that sources of clear water originating from their property is not discharged into the sanitary sewer system.

In accordance with Ordinance No. 4, 2009, The utility is preparing to pass along the 2017 and 2018 Consumer Price Index – All Urban User increases placed on the utility under the contract with Citizens Energy Group. This increase will add \$.03 to the current Sewer Tracking rate creating a new tracker fee of \$.13 per thousand gallons. For a typical household using 5,000 gallons per month, this would equate to an additional \$.15 in monthly sewer charges. The increase is planned to start with the July 2018 billings.



9 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IRRIGATION BACKFLOW

This is the time of year when many of you put your irrigation systems into service. This means getting backflow devices tested and the reports sent to the utility office and your systems checked for proper operation, programming of timers/zones, etc. I know that oftentimes I drive around during rain events and see sprinkler systems running and see a lot of sprinkler heads spraying water onto sidewalks and into the street, thereby wasting water. Irrigation usage creates a transient demand on our water supply that is above normal demand during the watering season. This spike in usage requires the utility to have and maintain adequate pumping capacity which is not used for a good part of the year but must still be there. This irrigation demand places additional costs on the utility. I know that many of our customers take great pride in the appearance of their properties and automatic irrigation systems are a big part of that. But if you choose to have such a system, it is your responsibility to ensure that they meet installation requirements and, for your own benefit, operate properly so that water is not being wasted. Here are some Lawrence requirements you should be aware of:

1. All irrigation systems are now required to be on a dedicated water meter. This was changed several years ago but many customers and installers are not aware of this requirement. Tapping the domestic water line inside a meter pit is no longer allowed and neither is tapping inside the structure such as in a garage or utility room, crawl space,

- etc. Having the system on a dedicated meter benefits the customer by avoiding sewer charges entirely on the irrigation meter, which is classed as a "water only" meter.
2. Existing meter pits can be modified with the installation of a "dual meter setter" which allows both the domestic and the irrigation meter to be in the same meter pit. This avoids having a separate tap and meter pit in the yard, which would add additional expense for the system installation (a water tap fee is \$500.00, excluding the cost of the meter pit, fittings and piping, which are all the customers responsibility). If your meter is inside the home or structure you may either have a separate tap, or else move the meter from inside the structure to outside in a pit. While you will still have to pay for the meter pit and its installation, the Utility will waive the \$500.00 tap fee if a domestic meter is moved outside in conjunction with the installation of a dual meter set up with the domestic and irrigation meters being in the same pit.
3. Irrigation system installations are required to be permitted. There is a permit application fee of \$50.00, a plan review fee of \$90.00 and an inspection fee of \$50.00. In addition, there is a \$150.00 EDU fee for a residential system and a \$300.00 EDU fee for a commercial system. Tap fee (if tap is required) is \$500.00.
4. If sprinkler heads are proposed to be located in the public right of way (such as the grass strip between the curb and sidewalk in most subdivisions) a right of way permit is required.
5. Irrigation system contractor must

- be licensed, bonded and insured to work in the City of Lawrence (cannot just have a Marion County license).
6. Backflow devices must be tested and the test reports sent to the utility annually. Failure to submit the test on time may result in water service disconnection. Test reports in pdf format may be emailed to: backflow@cityoflawrence.org and dback@cityoflawrence.org.
7. Customers having an irrigation system may not contact the utility stating that they are electing to not use the system to avoid having to have a backflow test done. If you have a system, the backflow device must be tested whether you use the system or not. This is to protect the public water supply. Shutting off the water supply valve is not an option.
8. Customers electing to abandon their irrigation systems may do so and an inspection by a utility inspector is required to verify the physical disconnection from the public water supply, cutting and capping of the water line leading to and from the backflow device and removal of the backflow device.
9. Violation of backflow rules can lead to stiff penalties. If you are unsure of the rules or requirements, please contact the utility and we will provide the answers you need.



Thank you,

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