



Water Views

September 2009

"A District of Distinction"
Serving the Public - Respecting the Environment

WATER ALLOCATION REPORT CARD

September means back to school for many families and El Toro Water District (ETWD) wants to start the year off with a report card for water allocation. Like many water districts across southern Orange County, ETWD imports nearly 100% of its water supply from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). MWD recently reduced our water allocation and forced ETWD to follow suit and implement a water allocation plan.

Through various forms of communication with customers and educational programs, ETWD launched its water allocation plan this past June. Even though we only have a few months of data, the initial news is positive. Overall, the majority of our customers were successful in remaining within their allocation budget.



The ETWD Customer Service team is working with customers who exceeded their allocation. If you need clarification regarding your water budget and your actual consumption, please contact us. We will review the allocation budget with you; discuss any circumstances that may have impacted the water budget and /or your consumption.

Thank you for supporting the allocation plan and the necessity for the water rate increase. Like the price of so many commodities, the cost of water is rising. When MWD, the region's water supplier, raised the price of water by 20 percent, ETWD had no choice but to pass the rate increase along to customers. Hopefully, as customers increase conservation efforts, they will consume less water and won't see a substantial increase in their monthly water bill.

It is imperative that we begin to change our consumption habits and make strides toward creating a new standard of environmental stewardship.

For more information about water allocation, please contact Customer Service at 949.837.0660 or district@etwd.com.

IN THIS ISSUE

Water Allocation Report Card	1
Flushable Wipes & the Sewer System	2
Water Conservation Corner	3
Water Education Corner	4

Flushable Wipes and the Sewer System

Most people are busy and need to fit their housework into crowded schedules. Supermarket shelves are filled with cleaning products that entice shoppers with the promise of ease and convenience, including a new product that's become popular in the past few years – disposable cleaning wipes. However, convenience has its price.

While some products boast the added convenience of being flushable and safe for sewers and septic systems, these wipes do not degrade before they get to the sewer pumps.

Our crews are increasingly being called out to do battle with great balls of “flushable” cleaning wipes, pads, facial tissues, baby wipes and feminine hygiene products that have become tangled in pumping equipment.

In a worst-case scenario, jammed up pumps can lead to raw sewage overflows into homes, businesses and waterways, which threatens public health and the environment. At best, these problems are making the treatment process more expensive for ratepayers.

The materials that do make it to ETWD's treatment plant have to be screened out, removed and taken to SOCWA, the South Orange County Wastewater Authority plant, for disposal, so “flushable” wipes often end up in the garbage anyway. However, using the sewer system to transport trash is a very expensive and inefficient way to get it there, not to mention a waste of resources such as labor, energy and water.

So why are some products labeled “flushable” when they don't break down in the system? Producers of products are

required to provide supportable data for environmental claims related to waste disposal. However, the existing standards for evaluating flushability are limited, according to a 2003 study published by the Water Environment Research Foundation. WERF is America's leading independent scientific research organization dedicated to wastewater and stormwater issues.

According to WERF, flushability should be the subject of further study. Companies



ETWD employee, Stuart Kain, removing debris from a sanitation pump.

also should consider the varying conditions of wastewater systems, differing local environmental

requirements and reg-

ulations, and how the products are compatible with wastewater conveyance and treatment systems.

It's important to clarify that ETWD has not conducted tests on any particular brand or type of disposable or flushable product. ETWD does not discourage people from buying and using cleaning wipes. ETWD DOES urge consumers who choose these products to dispose of them in the trash instead of flushing them down the toilet.

ETWD recommends flushing only bodily waste and toilet paper – that's it.

Everything else should be appropriately put in the trash, composted or recycled. Not only does this protect the local and regional sewer systems, but it can help residents avoid their own pipe clogs and expensive plumbing repairs.

Water Conservation Corner

Irrigation Schedule

ETWD declared a Level 1 - Water Alert effective July 1, 2009. This declaration included mandatory conservation measures, water allocations and limits on outside watering. We would like to take this opportunity to remind our customers of the water restrictions. Watering between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. is prohibited. Your assigned watering days are 3 days per week and can be found on the table below. If you have an automatic sprinkler system, please take a few minutes to change your clock to the correct days and time. Watering or irrigating your lawn or landscape is limited to 15 minutes or less per day, per valve.



LEVEL 1 ASSIGNED OUTDOOR WATERING DAYS			
Aliso Viejo	MON	THUR	SAT or SUN
Laguna Hills	TUE	FRI	SAT or SUN
Laguna Woods	TUE	FRI	SAT or SUN
Lake Forest	TUE	FRI	SAT or SUN
Mission Viejo	MON	THUR	SAT or SUN

Outdoor Water Saving Tips

- # 1 Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk or street.
- # 2 Choose shrubs and groundcovers instead of turf for hard-to-water areas such as steep slopes and isolated strips.
- # 3 Plant in the fall when the weather conditions are cooler and rainfall is more plentiful.
- # 4 Check the rootzone of your lawn or garden for moisture before watering using a spade or trowel. If it's still moist 2 inches under the soil structure, you still have enough water.
- # 5 Water your lawn and garden in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler to minimize evaporation. Watering is prohibited between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- # 6 If water runs off of your lawn easily, split your watering time into shorter periods to allow for better absorption.
- # 7 Install covers on pools and spas to help slow evaporation.
- # 8 Check for leaks around your pool and spa pumps.
- # 9 Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway and sidewalk and save water every time.
- # 10 Check outdoor faucets, sprinklers and hoses for leaks.

Water Education Corner



H₂O FACTS

DID YOU KNOW THAT:

80% of the world is covered by water or ice.

20% is dry land.

97% of the world's water is salty and undrinkable.

2% of the available drinking water is frozen in ice caps and glaciers.

1% of the world's water is available for drinking.



Approximately 1% of water consumed by El Toro Water District is used for drinking. The remaining 99% of our water is used to water lawns, flush toilets, shower/bath, wash clothes, do dishes, and lost in undetected leaks.

55% is used to water our lawns.

20% gets flushed down the toilets.

15% is used in showers and baths.

7% is used to clean our laundry and dishes.

2% is lost through undetected leaks.

1% is used to drink.

The average person uses 80 to 100 gallons of water per day. Take a few minutes each day and think of a ways you can help save water at home.

We all need to help conserve water!



Don't waste water!

The El Toro Water District is a California Water District governed by an elected Board of Directors.



EL TORO WATER DISTRICT

24251 Los Alisos Blvd. • Lake Forest, CA 92630
(949) 837-0660 • www.etwd.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Ted F. Martin

Vice President

M. Scott Goldman

Director/Treasurer

John S. Dudley

Director

William H. Kahn

Director

Jerard B. Werner

General Manager

Robert R. Hill

Water Views Editor

Sherri Seitz

The Mission of the El Toro Water District is to plan and invest appropriately to provide its customers a safe, adequate and reliable supply of water, wastewater and recycled water service in an environmentally and economically responsible way.

Water Views is published quarterly to keep water users in the El Toro Water District informed about water and wastewater related issues and events and is prepared by District staff.

Your comments and suggestions are welcome.

Please call Customer Service at (949) 837-0660 or visit our website at www.etwd.com.

Printed on recycled paper.

Para la información en español, llame por favor al servicio de cliente, (949) 837-0660.