

How to Lower Your Water Bills

If you feel your water consumption is higher than it should be, you should check for leaks. The most common leaks are toilets.

Leaking water produces a high water bill without your knowledge. Some leaks are sporadic and require some detective work. Other leaks are very obvious. It doesn't matter what type of leak you have, they both have solutions.



How to detect a leak

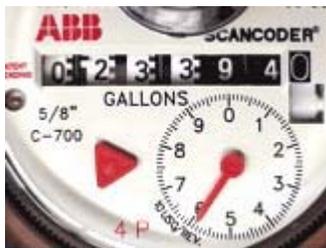
Your water meter can be a valuable tool in detecting leaks. If you don't know the location of your water meter, call the water office to find out the location. You will need a wrench to loosen the bolt on the meter lid. CAREFULLY raise the lid to avoid breaking the wire that connects the meter to the lid. REMEMBER, if you damage this connection, you will be responsible for the cost of the repair.

Locate the meter dial. It should look like the photo below.

Some meter pits are full of water. This does not mean that you have a leak. It could be natural ground water. You may have to use a pump to remove the water from your meter pit or bail the water out with a small bucket.

Make sure all water using fixtures in your home are not in use. Check to see if the triangle on the face of the meter is moving. It is a low flow indicator. If it is, you either have a leak or something in your home is using water. Go find it! Places to look are toilets (flappers get old and wear out) faucets, hot water heaters, water softeners etc. The sweep hand turns a full rotation when 10 gallons of water has gone through the meter.

How to read your meter



On the meter diagram shown, the reading is taken from the figures shown above the word gallons. The meter reads 233,946 which is the total number of gallons of water recorded since the meter was installed. Because our charge is only in thousands and hundreds, the meter reader discards the last two digits with the black background. The reading shown would be 233.9 or 233,900 gallons. Look at your most recent water bill. The reading under current reading would now be your previous reading. Subtract the previous reading from the reading on your meter now and you will have the amount of water usage since your last reading.

Check for toilet leaks

Toilet leaks are one of the most common sources of leaks. Leaky toilets can waste hundreds of gallons a day undetected and should be repaired immediately. Pinpointing a toilet leak is easy and usually inexpensive. Follow these procedures to locate a toilet leak:

1. Wait 5-10 minutes after the last flush.
2. Remove tank cover. Is the water level in the tank too high and spilling into the overflow tube? If it is you have a leak.
3. While you have the tank cover off, put food coloring, laundry bluing or a leak detector tablet in the toilet tank. Wait at least 30 minutes. If the colored water appears in the bowl, you have a leak.

Service Line Leaks

Water leaks can develop in the home's water service line. Although such leaks can be difficult to detect, there are some telltale signs which may indicate that you have a leak in your service line.

You should be continuously observant for:

- Wet spots in your yard between the meter vault and your house.
- The sound of running water or a hissing sound coming from your main shut off valve when water is not being used in your home.
- Water leaking into your basement or crawl space near the location of your water service line.
- A noticeable loss in water pressure or flow throughout your home.
- Water bills showing progressively higher water consumption that cannot be explained otherwise.

Use this procedure to check for a service line leak:

Turn off the main shut off valve inside your home and then go outside and check your water meter. If your water meter is turning, you have a leak underground and may have to contact a plumber.

