

# Water Usage and Water Leak Information

## Gauging Water Use

### Reading Your Meter

The water meter measures the amount of water you use, and its readings serve as the basis for your water charges. We read meters monthly in most areas. The meter may be inside, often in the basement, or it may be outside, usually in a pit at the curb. Water meters measure the amount of flow from the water main into the home plumbing system. Only the flow of water into the meter can cause its dial to move to register water usage. At many properties with a meter inside, we have installed devices outside so that we can read the meter without having to enter your property.

Since the register is never reset while the meter is in service, the usage for any given period is determined by subtracting the previous reading from the present reading.

### If Your Bill is Unusually High

An unusually high bill can occur for many reasons. A little investigation can help you save water and money.

Actual readings:

Make sure your meter is accessible, so your bill is based on actual readings. When we cannot obtain a meter reading, we try to estimate usage accurately. However, a high bill can occur when an actual meter reading follows several estimated readings that were too low. To avoid estimated readings, make sure your meter is easily accessible to our meter reading crews.

Check for leaks:

Small leaks can quickly add up to many gallons lost. A dripping faucet can waste 15 gallons a day. Just a 1/8-inch sized leak consumes more than 3,500 gallons per day. Most leaks are easy to find, but some can go undetected. You may want to check:

- Your toilet. It is not uncommon to lose more than 100 gallons a week to a toilet leak. You can check for leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring in the tank, then watch for a few minutes. If the color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak that needs to be repaired. Similarly, leak detection kits have dye tablets that perform the same function.
- Dishwasher/clothes washer. Look for drips or stains underneath or behind these appliances.
- Indoor and outside faucets. Replace worn gaskets and washers.
- Sprinkler systems. Check for damaged sprinkler system heads and system leaks.

Look at your water usage:

- The high bill may be explained by changes in the way your household is using water.
- Did you use more water keeping your lawn green?
- Is your water sprinkler system functioning properly?
- Did you do extra loads of laundry before or after a vacation?
- Did you have friends or relatives staying at your house?

## **Water Usage for standard homes**

### **Toilets (gallons per flush)**

Conventional: 5.0

Low-Flow: 3.5

Ultra Low-Flow: 1.6

### **Washing Machines (gallons per load)**

Conventional: 37.0

Wash Recycle: 26.0

Front Load: 21.0

### **Faucets (gallons per minute)**

Conventional: 3.0

Low-Flow: 2.5

### **Showerheads (gallons per minute)**

Conventional: 5.0

Low-Flow: 2.5