



Higher Water Consumption Troubleshooting Tips

There are numerous reasons why your consumption may increase from one month to the next:

- Landscape watering schedule
- Irrigation system
- Aging or defective water softeners
- Weather
- Billing cycles

The following information may help you discover the reason(s) for increased usage.



Landscape watering schedule/Irrigation System

1. If you have an irrigation timer, check the programming. Sometimes a second start time gets added or a valve may have a run time on two different programs. Also, if a power outage occurs, the controller may have reverted back to a default program and needs to be reprogrammed.
2. Irrigation leaks may only display themselves when the system is running. Remember to turn on your irrigation/sprinkler system, run

each individual station separately and look for blown or damaged sprinkler heads or faulty drip emitters. A dark wet area (without a drip emitter) is a good indicator during the system run time of a possible leak within the system.

Aging or defective water softeners

Make sure appliances such as water softeners are cycling on and off appropriately according to manufacturer's recommendations.

Weather

Weather can affect the amount of water you consume each month. Remember you are billed this month for water that you consumed last month.

Billing Cycles

The number of days in the billing cycle may affect total consumption. All efforts are made monthly to provide a consistent billing cycle. There may be occasions due to weather and/or holidays that the number of days in your cycle differs (28 days vs 32 days cycle read).

Check Flow at the Meter

The meter can help you determine if you have on-going or continual water usage. Conducting a meter flow check is easy to do.



1. First make sure everything that uses or consumes water in your home is off and not currently in use.
2. Locate the water meter (usually located in the front of your property near the street or sidewalk) and lift the lid with a meter key to expose the water meter. Beware of insects or critters inside the meter box.

3. Look for the odometer register dial and wheel or digital display. Record the starting numbers.
4. Don't use any water for at least 20 minutes and come back and take a second reading.
5. If the two sets of numbers are different, then you have a leak and you'll want to determine what is consuming the water. If you can see that the wheel is turning or the GPM has usage, then a small amount of water is being consumed. Even the smallest amount of water can add up to be significant.
6. If the two sets of numbers are the same, and the wheel is not moving or the GPM has not changed, skip to ***Meter Flow Check Displays No Water Use.***

Meter Flow Check Displays Water Use:

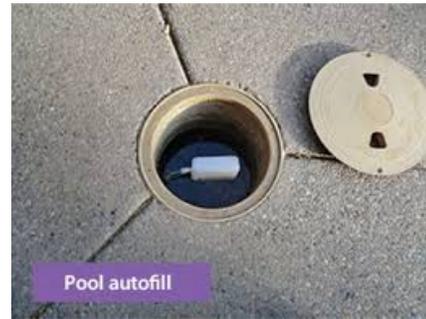
Proceed by making sure your service line isn't leaking. (A service line is either a copper or plastic line located underground that is under pressure and provides water from the Town's water main through your meter to your residence.) Go to the house shut off valve. This is either a ball valve or gate valve usually located at the front or side of the house near the hose spigot. Turn the shut off valve to the "off" position. If irrigation and/or an automatic pool filler line are located before the house shut off valve, turn their shut off valve to the "off" position as well. The goal is to only allow the service line to receive water in order to verify a leak within the service line. Check the water meter to see if the water has stopped. If there is no movement or water use indicated at the water meter then your service line is in good shape. Water usage or movement on the water meter indicates a leak within the service line. Remember to turn the shut off valve(s) back on after the completion of the test.

Locating possible outdoor on-going or continual water consumption

1. Check for malfunctioning irrigation control valves. Look for constantly "oozing" or

dripping leaks in low lying areas within the landscaping. Check in and around irrigation valve boxes. Look for "soggy" or "soft" spots, dark soil or excessive plant growth.

2. Check hose bibs or spigots to make sure they are completely turned off. (Spray triggers at the ends of hoses are notorious for leaks!)



3. Automatic fills for pools, fountains, or pet troughs can also fail. Make sure these devices are working properly.
4. If necessary, you can isolate either the irrigation or automatic pool fill lines (one at a time) by turning the individual water supply valve to the "off" position. Check the water meter to see if it has stopped moving and recording water use. If the consumption has stopped, you have likely isolated the source for the increased water consumption.

Locating possible indoor on-going or continual water consumption

- Toilet leaks can be silent and can waste as much as 5,000 gallons per day! To identify if your toilet has a leak, remove the toilet tank lid, drop one dye tablet or 10 drops of food coloring into the tank. (Dye tablets are available at the Utility Department). Put the lid back on. DO NOT FLUSH. Wait at least 10-15 minutes (can be up to 20 minutes) and then look in the bowl. If you see colored water, you have a leak. If not, you don't. The most common cause of a toilet leak is a worn out flapper assembly.



- Look under sinks and check for damp or wet spots within the cabinet.
- Check faucets and showerheads to make sure they are completely turned off and not leaking.
- Check water supply lines to appliances such as water heaters, water filters, refrigerator ice maker/water dispensers, and water softener systems.



Meter Flow Check Displays No Water Use:

1. Check irrigation as detailed in the above ***Landscape Watering Schedule/Irrigation System***
2. Turn on pool equipment, fountains and other appliances to check for leaks or malfunctions when they are in use.
3. Automatic pool fill systems can disguise issues within your pool. Occasionally, shut off the water supply line to the auto fill and see if the pool level drops during normal evaporation.
4. Make sure appliances such as water softeners are cycling on and off appropriately according to manufacturer's recommendations.

Water Tips:

Shower – Take shorter showers. Just one minute less each day could save about 75 gallons of water a month.

You can save up to 40% of the water used for showering by replacing your older showerhead with a water efficient model. When replacing the showerhead be sure to look for one that has a flow rate of less than 2.5 GPM for maximum efficiency.

Laundry – Wash only full loads. Since the average American family washes about 300 loads of laundry each year, and doing laundry accounts for about 17% of the water used in a typical home, those savings can add up quickly.

Dishwasher – Let your dishwasher do the work. The average household does about 215 dishwasher loads per year. Most conventional dishwashers use about 10 gallons per load. Save time, water, and energy by using your dishwasher rather than washing dishes by hand.

Faucet – Bathroom and kitchen sink faucets account for 19% of the water used in an average home. A leaky faucet that drips at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons per year.

Toilet – Older toilets can use four times more water to flush! More than 47% of water use in the average American home occurs in the bathroom, with nearly 24% being used by toilets. Fortunately, your household can significantly curb its toilet water usage by regularly checking for and fixing leaks, retrofitting older toilets, or installing a new toilet.