

How to Read Your Water Meter



Find your meter box, which is typically located in the front of your property near one of

the side property lines with your neighbor. Homes in the Highlands subdivision may have their boxes located in the easement behind the home.

The meter box will typically be a rectangular concrete box with a concrete/cast iron lid marked "water". In some areas the box may be identified by a round 18"

diameter cast iron lid marked "water meter." The TCPUD maintains records of your water box location and can be contacted for further assistance if you

cannot find your box. Carefully remove the water box lid using a large screwdriver or other tool. Please take great care in not damaging the meter, transmitter or associated wires. Those with the 18" diameter round meter box must carefully remove the bracket holding the



transmitters and then remove the large green foam plug to view the meters. **These items must be properly replaced to avoid freeze damage or improper operation.**

Once you have the box open, you will see the top of the meter; lift the protective cover to expose the meter face. On the face of the meter you will



see a large dial, a small red star wheel and a set of numbers similar to a car's odometer. The large dial typically reads gallons. The small star wheel is used to detect leaks and minor usage. The odometer reads total gallons used. Read the odometer left to right, including the fixed zero on the far right.

Record the reading and then compare it to your latest bill, or re-read your meter within the next day or two to determine your daily consumption. If you suspect you have a leak, you will notice constant or intermittent movement in the small red star wheel. Inspect all your fixtures, toilets, faucets, hose bibs and irrigation and isolate or repair as appropriate. If the star wheel continues to move, you may have a leak somewhere underground.



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Our website also has updates and additional information:
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How to Check For a Water Leak

Step 1. Turn off all water-using appliances so that no water is being used. This means turning off all water inside and outside the house including showers, sinks, washing machines, and any appliance that uses water. If you have an irrigation system, make sure you are currently not watering, but leave the system charged.

Step 2. Locate your meter box to access your meter. Refer to “How to Read Your Water Meter” pamphlet.



Step 3. Take the lid off the meter box and lift the protective cover. See “How to Read Your Water Meter” pamphlet for directions. **Watch the meter.** Your meter will have a red star wheel that is commonly called a “leak indicator.” If it is spinning, even very slowly, you have a leak. If it is not spinning, look at the red pointer and note the number it is pointing at.

Once again, make certain that all water is off and return in 10-20 minutes to see if the red pointer has moved. If it has moved you have a slow leak — go to step 4. If not, you do not have a leak.

Step 4. If you have an irrigation system, shut it off at the backflow prevention assembly. If the meter stops spinning, the leak is in the irrigation system.

Step 5. If the meter keeps spinning, locate your main shut off valve at the house (often referred to as a stop and drain valve), which is usually located under the house. Close this valve and open the nearest, lowest fixture to make sure the water is fully shut off.

Step 6. Return to your meter and observe if the red star wheel has stopped moving. Look again at the red pointer and note the number it is pointing at. Return in 10-20 minutes to see if the red pointer has moved. If the star wheel is moving, or the red pointer has moved in the 10-20



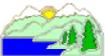
minutes, you most likely have a leak on your water line between the meter box and the house. Please contact a local plumber to have this investigated and repaired.



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YOUR LEAK REPAIR CHECKLIST

Plumbing leaks waste water and cost you money. Finding and fixing leaks is easy and inexpensive. Start by fixing all visible leaks, both inside and outside your home or business. If you have a drip at a faucet or a running toilet, you usually can repair it yourself with a few simple tools in less than one hour.

- **Toilet Leaks** — Leaks inside your toilet can waste up to 200 gallons per day. **Dye test your toilets before performing any other checks.** Follow the steps in this pamphlet to dye test and fix common problems.
- **Faucet/Showerhead Leaks** — Faucet leaks are easy to spot. Remember to check all sinks and bathtubs and under all sinks.
- **Outdoor Leaks**
 - √ Check all hoses and hose bibs (outside faucets) for visible drips or wet spots on the ground. If they are leaking repair or contact a plumber.
 - √ If you have an outside irrigation system, visually check it monthly for broken heads and wet spots along lines or near heads. Look at the backflow prevention assembly on your irrigation system; if there is a wet spot on the ground under it, the assembly may need to be repaired.

Invisible Leaks — After you have repaired all visible leaks, **and dye tested your toilets,** check for invisible leaks using the “How to Check For a Water Leak” procedure on the other side of this pamphlet.

The most common invisible leaks are:

- **Irrigation system leaks:** Check for leaking solenoid valves, leaking auto-drain valves or leaking drain valves. Contact a professional landscaper if your system leaks and you can't repair it.
- **Stop and Waste Valves:** Many homes are equipped with stop and waste valves. Check to see that your valve is fully open or closed and that it is not leaking. If your valve is old and hard to operate, we suggest replacing it. Contact a licensed plumber.
- **Crawl Space:** Check all crawl spaces for leaks in pipes, water heater blow offs or valves.
- **Leaking Service Line (from meter to house):** Contact a licensed plumber or excavating contractor to repair or replace your service line.

Toilet Tune-ups

Most toilet leaks are easy to fix. Here are simple repair steps to follow:

- ⇒ **Water Level Adjustment** — If the water level is too high in the toilet tank, it will spill into the overflow tube, causing the water to run. The float can be adjusted by turning the adjustment screw clockwise. If you have a newer model with the float on the ballcock assembly, lower the wire link using the “v” shaped clip. The water should shut off one inch below the top of the overflow tube, or some toilets may have a fill line on the inside of the tank to use as a guide.
- ⇒ **Handle Adjustment** — If you have to jiggle the handle to keep the toilet from “running,” the guide-chain or the handle itself may be sticking. Check the chain adjustment. If it is too tight, loosen it a couple of links. Adjust the nut that secures the handle to the toilet tank. If that does not work, you may need to replace the handle. Remember to take it with you when looking for a replacement.

⇒ **Dye Test**— Most people think that their toilet does not leak. To find out if yours does, put a dye tablet or several drops of food coloring into the toilet tank. Wait 15 to 30 minutes and **DO NOT FLUSH!** If colored water appears in the bowl, you have a silent leak and will most likely need to replace the flapper or reduce the water level in the tank. Dye tablets are available at the TCPUD office.

⇒ **Flapper Replacement** — If the flapper is worn, it should be removed and replaced. When removing or replacing the flapper, note how the chain is adjusted before the old flapper is removed. You also should check the valve seat for scale or corrosion. If the surface of the valve seat is rough, get some 400-grit wet or dry sandpaper and lightly go over the entire surface. Repeat the process until the surface is smooth. If cleaning does not work, you can purchase a combination flapper/valve seat that is made to fit over the existing valve seat. Make sure to take the existing parts with you when purchasing replacements.

⇒ **Still Leaking?** - If none of these steps solve the problem, contact a plumber to repair the toilet. TCPUD also offers rebates for new toilets. See www.tcpud.org for more information.

