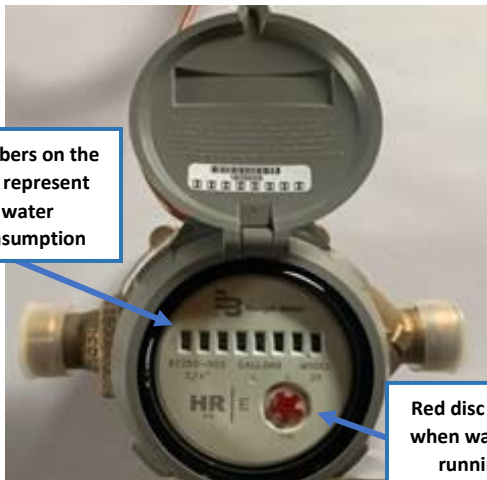


## Reading Your Water Meter

Your water meter tells you how much water you are using. If you understand what you are looking at, and with a little detective work, you can discover if there is a water leak in your home.

The red disc on your meter spins when water is being used. To detect if there is a possible leak, look at your meter when no water is being used in your home. For example, no one should be using the washroom, taking a shower, washing dishes or clothes, or watering the garden. When looking at your water meter, watch if the red disc is slowly moving. If it is, there is likely a slow leak at some location within your home.

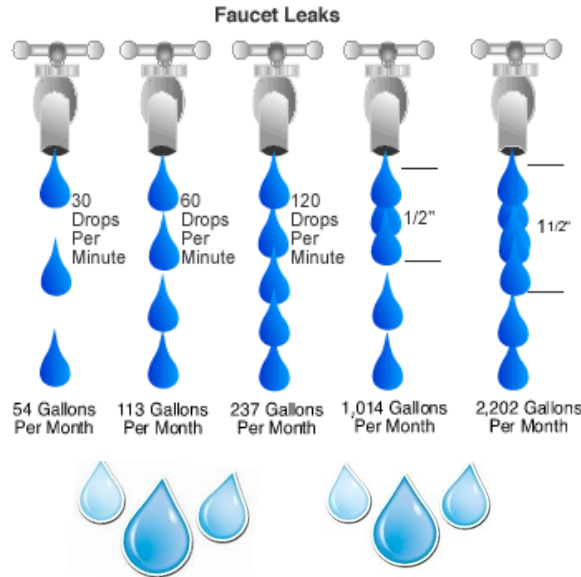
The numbers on the water meter can also indicate a leak. Check what the numbers are at night when water is no longer being used. In the morning, check the numbers again before any water is turned on. If the numbers have increased, then it is likely you have a water leak.



Numbers on the dial represent water consumption

Red disc spins when water is running through meter

A leak in your home can cost you money. Water loss at your home can be a hole in one of your water lines, a running toilet, or an outside water spigot that isn't shut off all the way, for example. Below is an illustration of how much water can be lost per month with just a drip in a faucet. This drip can lead to a steadier stream of water.



You may not realize how much water is used during a regular day. Below are examples of how much water is used for routine actions.

Typical Water Usage	
USE	Amount of Water
1 bath	42 gallons
1 shower	17 gallons
running tap while brushing teeth	1.3 gallons
shaving	2 gallons
wash 1 load of clothes	45 gallons
wash 1 load of clothes - high efficiency	11-32 gallons
run dishwasher	5-13 gallons
run dishwasher - high efficiency	4-6 gallons
flush toilet	3 gallons

## How To Detect and Resolve High Water Usage



### Carol Stream Public Works

124 Gerzevske Lane  
 Carol Stream, IL 60188  
 (630) 871-6260



# Top Reasons for a High Water Bill

## Leaky/Running Toilet

- A leaky toilet can waste up to **200 gallons** of water in a single day, or **1,400 gallons** of water per week.
- You can check for a toilet leak in three ways:
  - ✓ **Sound Check:** Walk up to your toilet and listen. If you hear an odd hiss-like noise, you may have a leak and will want to check further.
  - ✓ **Dye Test:** You will need some food coloring or a dye tablet. Take the lid off of your toilet's tank and put in a couple of drops of coloring (or a dye tablet). After you've put the dye in the tank, wait for 15-20 minutes and check the toilet bowl for dye. If dye is present, then there's a leak allowing tank water to flow into the bowl.
  - ✓ **Overfill Tube:** A leak in the overfill tube will empty directly into the sewer line without leaving any clues. Often there is no sound to alert you to the leak.
- In most cases, these leaks will be caused by a faulty flapper in the toilet tank. This is a relatively easy fix with a quick trip to a home improvement or hardware store.

## Leaky Faucets & Fixtures

- A simple visual check of your faucets, shower heads, and other fixtures is all it takes to identify a leak in the fixture.
- The most common cause of a faucet leak is a faulty rubber washer in the faucet handle. In most cases, you can shut off the water to the leaky faucet, unscrew the handle, remove the bad washer, and replace it with a new one.

## Old, Outdated Fixtures & Toilets

- In recent years, there have been numerous efficiency improvements made to common water fixtures, such as new-model aerators for faucets, low-flow water-saving toilets, and water-saving shower heads. A top-loading washing machine can consume as much as 200% more water than front-loading machines.
- Check your home's faucets, toilets, showerheads, and other water-using equipment for WaterSense labeling, or date of manufacture. These newer fixtures can reduce water waste.

## New Water-Consuming Equipment

- New equipment can significantly increase your water bill. These can include pools, sprinkler systems, washing machines, freezers, water softeners, and humidifiers.
- To minimize the impact of new equipment on your water bill, try to select appliances that are marked as high-efficiency or have the WaterSense logo.

## Recent Changes in Water Use

- One small change in your water use habits can have a big difference on your water bill. These changes include houseguests, or family members coming home from college, as well as a change in season with more outside watering of landscapes and gardens.

## Irrigation Leaks

- Not all leaks occur indoors. If you have an irrigation system for your landscaping, a cracked line or loose joint could allow water to leak even when the irrigation system is off.
- To spot these leaks, you may need to check your landscaping/lawn for unusually damp patches or areas of grass that are more lush than their surroundings.

## Whole House Humidifier

- The amount of water that a whole house humidifier uses varies, depending upon the model you choose, the size of your home, the humidistat settings that you use, and the current humidity levels in your home at any given time. On average, you can expect a humidifier to use 1.5 to 12 gallons of water per day.

## Bad Water Wasting Habits

- A substantial water bill can be the result of overconsumption behaviors. These include:
  - ✓ Using washing machines for half- or quarter-filled loads instead of waiting for a full load.
  - ✓ Overwatering lawns or unmediated use of water-consuming recreational toys and equipment.
  - ✓ Not completely shutting off outside water spigots.
  - ✓ Lengthy shower times; keeping showers less than 5 minutes can result in up to **1,000 gallons** of water savings **every month**.
  - ✓ Washing dishes by hand, which consumes 4-5 times more water than dishwashers.
  - ✓ Keeping water running while brushing teeth or shaving.

By being more conscious of your water use, and ensuring all appliances and equipment in your home are working efficiently, you should be able to reduce water waste.

