

High Water Usage

There are several possible reasons for high water usage:

Landscaping

Water consumption may increase in the summer months because of the hotter, drier weather. If your bill is unusually high, it may be due to your landscape watering. Make sure the timers on your automatic sprinklers are not set for too long or too often. For maximum savings, minimum pruning, and optimum plant health, adjusts the amount of water according to temperature, humidity and rainfall at least four times a year. After a power outage, recheck the settings on your timers. Watering your lawn during the coolest and calmest part of the day minimizes water loss due to evaporation and wind. Very early morning or after sunset are the best times to water. If you water manually, take care not to overwater. A standard hose can use as much as 20 gallons of water per minute. A hose left on by mistake can waste as much as 28,000 gallons in 24 hours! Don't water sidewalks or streets.

Do a Meter Test

To determine whether you have a leak, you can do a meter test. Go out to your meter. You will see a glass dial similar to a clock face. There will be an odometer style dial and a clock hand. Write down the positions of both. If the numbers are moving and you have turned all the water inside your home, including the icemaker, this is an indication that you have a leak. Visually inspect the sprinkler system both when it's on and off.

First, make sure the reading on the odometer dial is higher than the reading given on your latest bill. If the odometer reading is lower, then your meter was misread. (This happens less than 1 percent of the time, but does happen.) If your reading is lower, call us at **770-993-4231**.

After reading the meter, use no water for at least two hours. (You can read the meter just before you leave the house for work or to go grocery shopping or do the test overnight for more accurate results). Take a second reading. If you used no water, the two readings should be the same. If the reading has changed something on the property may be pulling water through the meter.

Finding the Problem

If your meter does show usage on the meter test, finding the problem is the responsibility of the property owner. But we can suggest some places to look.

An underground leak may not be apparent on the surface. Instead of causing puddles on the surface, the water may drain quickly, then follow the slope of the ground along sidewalks, into gutters and storm drains. Instead of puddles or soggy spots, look for areas of lush grass, unexpected vegetation or dark spots on the ground resulting from fungus growth.

A toilet running continuously can use as much as 4,000 gallons of water per day! Even a slow, silent leak can add gallons to your bill. Put a few drops of food coloring in the tank and see if it seeps through to the bowl. If it does, replace the flapper valve and/or the rubber gasket at the bottom of the tank. Make sure all your faucets turn off completely. Even a slow drip can use as much as 5,000 gallons a month. A steady stream can mean an increase of up to 21,000 gallons a month on your billing statement.

An evaporative cooler can use as much as 500 gallons of water per day if it doesn't have a recirculation pump. Even if there is a recirculation pump, the water level float can stick, causing water to run out the overflow.

Water softeners, water filters, water heaters, and automatic pool fillers also have water level floats that can stick open. (This may not be apparent if the overflow is piped into the drains.) If you suspect one of these appliances is the problem, turn it off and redo the meter test. If the usage stops, you have identified the source.

An automatic pool filler can disguise any problems you might have with the pool. Occasionally, shut the filler off and see if the pool level drops more than it would with normal evaporation. For example, a pool 20' wide and 40' long will lose an average of 3500 gallons of water per month to evaporation. (This is a yearly average and will be higher in the summer and lower in the winter.) That would result in a seven inch drop in pool level in a month or about 1/4" per day.

Use your meter to help you manage your water. Read your meter before and after different water activities such as irrigating your lawn, filling your pool, washing your car, or doing a load of laundry or dishes. For instance, determine the water consumption used when you water your yard. Multiply that by the number of times you water per month. This shows you what portion of your monthly water bill is used on your lawn.

Meter Bench Test

If you have done the leak check and feel the problem is with the meter, call us. We can have your meter tested for accuracy. However, once a meter begins to fail, it usually reads less water, not more.

Additional Information

- If you have a leak at your water meter or wish to report a leak, please call City Hall at **770-993-4231**.