

High Water Bills?

Customers are responsible for monitoring the usage on their water bill, and for promptly repairing leaks. If you suspect a water leak in your home, there are a number of things you can do to help locate your leak.

Toilets

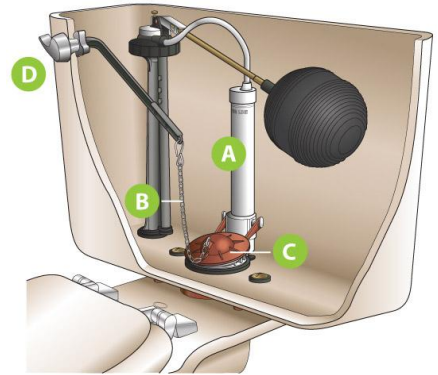
Toilet leaks are the most common type of leak found inside the home. **A running toilet can use over 5000 gallons a day, or 150,000 gallons a month, and a slow leak can use as much as 300 gallons a day, or 9000 gallons a month.** While a running toilet is often easily seen, slow toilet leaks can be silent, and may go unnoticed. Understanding the basic mechanics of your toilet may save you thousands of gallons of water a year.

Perform a toilet dye test:

- Lift the tank cover.
- Place a few drops of food coloring into the tank.
- Wait 15 minutes (do not flush or use the toilet).
- If the color appears in the toilet bowl, you have a leak.

If you have a leak, check:

- A Overflow Tube:** Water should be a half-inch below the top
- B Lift Chain:** It should not catch on anything.
- C Flapper:** Ensure it is seating properly.
- D Flush Handle:** Make sure it functions properly.



Toilet Maintenance tips:

- Consider replacing your flapper every 3-5 years, as they are prone to warping and leaking. Putting chlorine products in the tank may decrease the life of your flapper.
- Turn off the water at the supply line before removing tank parts.
- To help you find the right replacements, take old toilet parts with you to the home improvement store.

Water Supply Lines, Valves and Corrosion

Water-using devices can leak and cause damage to walls and floors, potentially creating an environment for mold or mildew. Look for leaks in supply lines, fittings and valves. Also, look for leaks caused by corrosion, such as a rusty water heater bottom. Some leaks may only occur when a water-using device is in operation. Run water-using devices, such as a clothes washer or dishwasher, to see if a leak occurs while running. Wet soggy areas in your lawn may be an indicator of an underground leak between the meter and your house.

Look and listen for running or dripping water on any water using device:

- Inside and outside faucets
- Refrigerators with ice/water dispensers
- Whole house humidifiers
- Water softeners
- Clothes washers
- Dishwashers
- Water heaters

Please note, **the Town code requires leaks be repaired within 24 hours of discovery.** The town allows bill adjustments for outdoor leaks between the meter and house, and also some partial adjustments for indoor leaks under limited circumstances. Guidelines can be found on the website.

If, after performing a thorough check of your household, you are unable to locate a leak, contact the utility billing department at 540-347-2678. We may be able to help you determine if you have a leak, and also help determine if it's an inside or outside (underground) leak.

Did You know?

According to the EPA:

The average person uses 88 gallons of water per day, or 2640 gallons per month.

The average family of four uses 400 gallons of water per day, or 12000 gallons per month.

The average household loses more than 10,000 gallons of water each year through leaks.

Common Causes of Leaks

Possible Cause of Leak	Intermittent Leak	Continuous Leak
Outside faucet, garden or sprinkler system leaking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Toilet valve not sealed properly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Toilet running		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Faucet in kitchen or bathrooms leaking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ice maker leaking		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Soaker hose in use		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Leak between the water meter and the house		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Washing machine leaking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dishwasher leaking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hot water heater leaking		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Watering yard for more than eight hours	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continuous pet feeder		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Whole house humidifier	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Water-cooled air conditioner or heat pump	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Filling a swimming pool		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Any continuous use of water for 24 hours		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

What constitutes a leak?

Meter algorithms are set to factor out typical day-to-day water usage such as ice makers, sprinklers, etc. A day is divided into 96 15-minute intervals. If all 96 15-minute intervals show water usage, this constitutes a **continuous leak**. If 50 to 95 of the 15-minute intervals show water usage, this constitutes an **intermittent leak**. Typically 15-20 percent of a water utility's customer base has undetected leaks.