



Higher Water Consumption Troubleshooting Tips

There are numerous reasons why your water 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 your 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

Billing cycles can also effect 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 day 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 screwdriver to expose the water meter. Beware of insects or critters inside the meter box.
3. Look for the odometer design register dial and wheel. 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, 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, 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 City's water main through your meter to your residence.) Go to the house shut off valve. This is either a ball valve or a 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 off its 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 generally located the area of the water use.

Locating possible indoor on-going or continual water consumption

1. Toilet leaks can be silent and can waste as much as 5,000 gallons per day! To identify if your toilet has a leak, put a few drops of food coloring in the tank, wait a few minutes (can be up to 20 minutes) and see if it seeps into the bowl. If it does, you have a leak. The most common cause of a toilet leak is a worn out flapper assembly.
2. Look under sinks and check for damp or wet spots within the cabinet.
3. Check faucets and showerheads to make sure they are completely turned off and not leaking.
4. 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 system 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.