

# Common Causes of High Water Bills

An usually high water bill is most often caused by a leak or changer in water use. Some common causes of high water bills include:



- A leaking toilet, or a toilet that continues to run after being flushed (see additional information below)
- A dripping faucet; a faucet drip can waste 20 gallons of water a day or more
- Filling or topping off a swimming pool or hot tub
- Watering the lawn, new grass, or trees; also check for open hose spigots
- Washing vehicles
- Humidifiers attached to the furnace that are improperly adjusted or not working correctly
- Kids home for summer vacations or school holidays; guests
- Water-cooled air conditioners
- A broken water pipe, or obvious leak; check the pipes in the basement or crawlspace; the water heater could also be leaking

A typical metered residential customer uses approximately 4-5 units per month, or around 14 per quarter.

## **The Dreaded Running Toilet**

Toilets account for almost one-third of all water used inside the average American home. This means that a leaking toilet is going to waste a significant amount of water and also be costly. **On average, it is estimated that a running or leaking toilet can waste 6,000 gallons of water in just a single month. (This = 6 units a month, which is 12 units a quarter, which equates to \$180.36)**

You can check for leaks both in a visual and auditory manner. Walk up to a toilet and listen for the sound of water flowing or a slight hissing sound. If you hear these noises, then your toilet flapper is allowing water to flow from the tank to the bowl. Visually, you will want to look for the apparent leaks at the pipe connections and seals.

Another test requires the use of food coloring or a dye tablet. Take the lid off the toilet tank and put a dye tablet or a few drops of food coloring into the water. Then wait for about 20 minutes before looking at the water in the toilet bowl. If there is a flapper leak, the water in the bowl will be the same color as the water in the tank. In most cases, a flapper replacement will solve the issue and save you a considerable amount of water and money.

(please see other side for more information)

## Leaking Fixtures

Dripping faucets and showers are not only annoying but also very wasteful. A faucet that drips once a second will waste about 15 gallons of water each day. And in round numbers, that is a little over 500 gallons each month. And that is just one faucet dripping. Fortunately, this is an easy leak to spot and to repair.

A worn-out rubber washer most often causes faucet leaks. This tiny part usually costs less than a dollar and can be replaced in just minutes. Turn the water off to the offending faucet. Then unscrew the handle, remove the worn-out washer and replace it with a new one. Then reinstall the handle and slowly turn the water to the faucet back on. This is a simple fix thanks to the shut-off valves that are installed under almost every sink in your home.



## Once the Leak is Repaired....

Once you have identified and fixed the reason for excess usage, you can bring supporting documents to the Utility Biller for a possible *leak credit adjustment* to your account. Supporting documents include: invoice/bill from plumber or whoever completed the repair, or if self-repaired, copies of receipts from items purchased for the repair.

<i>Unrepaired Leaks Can Be Costly</i>			
<u>Leak Size</u>	<u>Loss per month (in gallons)</u>	<u>Loss per month (in units)</u>	<u>Water/Sewer Cost per month</u>
•	3,600	3.6	\$ 55.91
•	10,800	10.8	\$ 167.72
•	20,790	20.8	\$ 322.87
•	36,000	36.0	\$ 559.08
•	57,600	57.6	\$ 894.53
•	92,880	92.9	\$ 1,442.43
•	128,880	128.9	\$ 2,001.51
•	199,200	199.2	\$ 3,093.58
•	209,520	209.5	\$ 3,253.85
•	252,720	252.7	\$ 3,924.74
•	296,640	296.6	\$ 4,606.82
•	339,720	339.7	\$ 5,275.85
•	381,600	381.6	\$ 5,926.25
•	448,560	448.6	\$ 6,966.14