



**Saving water makes cents!**

**Portland Water Bureau Customer Service**

For questions about your bill or more information on finding leaks, contact Customer Service at **503-823-7770**.

**Portland Water Bureau Water Efficiency Program**

The Portland Water Bureau provides **free water conservation devices and materials**. To order, visit [www.portlandoregon.gov/water/conservation](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/water/conservation) or call **503-823-4527**.



**Portland Water Bureau**  
1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Room 600  
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[www.portlandoregon.gov/water](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/water)

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# Yes! You can Find a Water Leak!



## Water Meter — Your Personal Leak Detective

In an average home, 18 gallons of water are lost to leakage each day – that’s over \$135 per year on your water and sewer bill.\* The most common culprits are leaking toilets or dripping faucets. If your water usage is higher than usual or averages more than 8 CCF per person every 3 months, you may have a leak.

All water services in Portland are metered. Meter readings determine the water and sewer charges on your quarterly bill. Reading your meter is a great way to detect a leak if you have one.

### Reading your meter

#### Step 1. Locate your meter

At residential properties, the water meter is generally located in the ground near the curb in front of the house. The meter box will have a metal lid with “Water Meter” marked on top.

#### Step 2. Open the meter

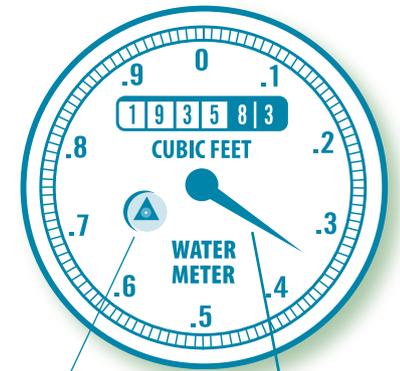
To read the meter, remove the lid of your water meter box. Be careful! Lids can be heavy and sometimes bugs and small animals hide inside the meter boxes. Replace the lid each time you finish looking at the meter to avoid a safety hazard.

#### Step 3. Understand the dial

Water is measured in CCFs, which are units of 100 cubic feet or 748 gallons. The meter shown to the right reads 1935 CCF for billing purposes. The last two numbers on the register are not read for billing. The register does not reset to zero after each read. One complete “sweep” of the sweep hand means you have used one cubic foot or 7.48 gallons of water.

#### Step 4. Find the leak detection dial

Most residential meters have a leak detection dial. The leak detection dial may be a red or blue triangular-shaped dial or a blue snowflake-shaped dial. It may spin rapidly when water is running. If water is dripping, the leak detection dial may move slowly.



Leak Detection Dial

Sweep Hand

\* This estimate is based on 2018-2019 rates for water at \$4.89 per CCF and sewer at \$10.44 per CCF.

## Checking for leaks

The meter is a great tool for checking your home for leaks. Now that you are familiar with where your meter is located and how it works, follow these steps to see whether you have a leak.

### Step 1. Stop using water

Turn off all water inside and outside the house including showers, sinks, the washing machine, and any other appliance that uses water.

### Step 2. Watch the meter

- Carefully take the lid off the water meter box.
- If your meter has a triangular blue or red “leak indicator” dial and it is spinning, you may have a leak.
- If there is no leak indicator and the actual meter sweep hand is moving, water is running somewhere in your system and you may have a leak.
- If the hand is not moving, note the position of the hand and wait several hours, making sure not to use any water in the house or yard. Check the meter again. If it has moved, you may have a slow leak.



## Checking for a toilet leak

The toilet is one of the most common places to find leaks in the home. Sometimes it's easy to tell whether a toilet is leaking – you hear water running. But leaks can be silent too. Checking for toilet leaks is easy:

- Step 1.** Remove the toilet tank lid.
- Step 2.** Place a dye tablet or 10 drops of food coloring into the toilet tank. Do not flush.
- Step 3.** Wait 10-15 minutes. If color appears in the bowl, this means water is leaking from the tank.
- Step 4.** Replace or repair your toilet. A detailed brochure on repairing toilet leaks is available at [www.portlandoregon.gov/water/conservation](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/water/conservation).

### Step 3. Find the leak — indoors or outdoors?

If you do have a leak, you will need to determine whether it's an indoor leak or an outdoor leak.

- Locate the main water shut-off valve in your house. It is usually located near the hot water heater, which may be in your basement or garage.
- Turn off the valve.

### Step 4. Test the valve

Turn on a faucet inside the house to test your shut-off valve.

- If water still flows from the faucet after several seconds, the shut-off valve is not working. There is no way to tell whether the leak is indoors or outdoors.
- If no water flows from the faucet, the shut-off valve is working. Return to the meter.

### Step 5. Check whether the meter's leak indicator or dial hand is moving

- If the leak indicator or dial hand is still moving, water is flowing between the meter and the shut-off valve in the house. That means you may have a leak between the shut-off valve and your meter, possibly an underground leak.
- If the hand is not moving, you may have a leak somewhere within your home's plumbing system. Possible sources are leaking toilets, faucets, appliances or even garden hoses.

## Next Steps

- The property owner is responsible for water pipes from the meter to the house. A permit from the Bureau of Development Services' Plumbing Division may be required for repairs. Call **503-823-7363** for information.
- Assistance may be available for income-qualified homeowners for leak repairs. Call Water Efficiency at **503-823-4527** for more information.
- Customers who have completed leak repairs within 90 days of notification of increased consumption may request an adjustment to their bill. Call Customer Service at **503-823-7770** for more information.
- Additional information on leak detection is available on our website, [www.portlandoregon.gov/water/conservation](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/water/conservation). If you have questions, please contact Customer Service at **503-823-7770**.

