



Why is my water bill suddenly very high?

A sudden rise in your metered water bill amount may be due to several reasons including:

- Plumbing leaks in toilets, fixtures and/or water softener
- An increase in the number of people living in the house, resulting in greater water usage
- A dry hot summer, resulting in higher water consumption
- Filling a swimming pool, hot tub, renovations or recent landscaping
- An increase in the number of days in the billing period
- Consecutive estimated water meter readings followed by an actual water meter reading

According to the American Water Works Association, the daily average water consumption for a family of four people is 1 cubic meter (m³), 219.97 gallons or 1,000 litres.

Leaks can end up causing extremely high bills. If you are aware of any type of water leak in your house you should repair it immediately, because it could save you money. It is important to check for leaks on your property. Leaking toilets and other fixtures misuse water and will increase the amount of your water bill. All water consumption, including water consumed by leaks, is the property owner's responsibility and is charged to your water account.

How do I check for leaks?

Toilets – Simply walk up to your toilet and listen. If you hear an odd hiss-like noise you may have a leak. Some toilets are intermittent, so you don't always see or hear the water running. To check if your toilet seeps, take the lid off the water tank, drop in some food colouring or brewed tea or coffee come back in 20 minutes. (Don't flush the toilet while you are waiting.) If colour appears in the toilet bowl, the rod-and-ball assembly or flapper needs adjustment or replacement.

Faucets – A simple visual check of your faucets, showers heads, and other fixtures is all it takes to identify a leak at the fixture. Perform an inspection with the water faucet turned both on and off, as some leaks only occur when the water is on.

Water Softener or Conditioner – One of the first signs that the water softener is not working as it should be is the sound. If it sounds like it is continuously running, it may be stuck in the processing stage, thus water is continuously running through the softener.

Recent Changes in Water Use – One small change in your water use habits or household situation can have a big difference on your water bill. Two big reasons you might change your water use habits include a change in season or adding a new guest/family member to your household.

Irrigation Leaks – Not all leaks occur indoors. If you have an irrigation system for your landscaping, a line crack or loose joint could allow water to leak even when the irrigation system is off. To spot leaks, you may need to check your lawn/landscaping for unusually damp patches or areas of grass that are lusher than their surroundings.

Outdoor Taps – Outdoor taps can be just as easy to blame as indoor taps. It could even be worse depending on how infrequently it is used. Often, your outdoor tap or hose will have some sort of leak while in use, a leak that doesn't necessarily go away.

Estimated Water Readings – There may have been a need to estimate your water reading for a billing cycle. An estimate is used when the actual meter cannot be read. This may be due to the meter being obstructed or not accessible. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure the meter is clear of debris or bushes.

Other Issues – check plumbing in the basement by monitoring for drips of water coming from exposed pipes. Occasionally, leaks develop behind walls or in areas that are not visible.

Read your meter

Read your meter periodically to monitor for drastic changes. Your meter can be found in your basement. The meter is located where your water line comes into your house (furnace room, near hot water tank or water softener). Monitor your reading in a 24-hour period or even a week to see how much water you are using. Compare the reading on your meter with the one on your bill to see if there is a significant increase.