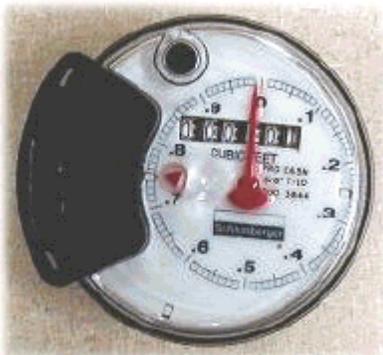


LEAK DETECTION CHECKLIST

HIGH WATER CONSUMPTION

Consumption may be high for many reasons. If a bill is estimated too low for a length of time, an actual meter reading may result in a large increase. More people may be living in the household. Your meter is reading actual consumption. Remember, during the Spring and Summer months, your water consumption normally increases due to several factors: washing your car, filling your pool, watering your garden or an outside hose may be left on. In commercial situations, you may have water-cooled air conditioning or your business may have increased or changed adding to water usage. Often, consumption may be high because of leaky plumbing.



STEP 1: USING YOUR WATER METER TO CHECK FOR LEAKS

1. Locate the water meter. It should be in your basement or near the street under a metal, plastic, or concrete lid. Water meters have numbers or spinning dials, which record usage. When water is not being used, none of the numbers or dials on the meter should move. Most meters also have a small "leak detector" arrow, which spins to record the low volume of water use that is common with leaks.
2. Turn off every water-using item inside and outside the home or building. Remember to shut off your swamp cooler and irrigation or sprinkling systems, and don't use your icemaker for a while before the test.
3. Watch the water meter for a minute or more. If the leak detector dial is moving, you might have a leak. In some cases, the leak detector dial might move back and forth very slightly - this is usually caused by water pressure fluctuations and is not a sign of a leak. If the leak detector dial moves forward continually, even at a slow rate, you have a leak. You may also want to check the main meter reading (numbers) at a set time, and then

LEAK DETECTION

come back an hour later to check the reading - ensuring that no water has been turned on during the hour. Another option may be to do this before bedtime and then first thing in the morning. If the meter reading has increased, there is a leak.

4. To determine whether the leak is inside or outside of your home, find the main shut-off valve for your home or building. It can be indoors or outdoors, but should be near the location where the water line enters the building. If you don't know where the shut-off valve is, follow a straight line from the water meter to your building, and look for it (if you have a very large building, it is possible you have more than one main shut-off valve - they should all be turned off).
 - a. Turn off, or close, the main shut-off valve and check the water meter. If the main shut-off valve is closed and the meter has stopped, the leak is not between the meter and the building (it is inside your home or building). If you need help with repairs, or in locating the leak, call a plumber.
 - b. If the meter runs with the shut-off valve closed, your leak is between the meter and the building. Since outdoor leaks are relatively rare, be sure to double-check that any outdoor lines or systems are off. If a leak between the meter and the building is suspected, carefully walk the path again from your meter to where the line enters your house or building to locate the leak. Look for obvious signs of an outdoor water leak, such as some sinking, wet shoes, or lush grass in an area where the rest of your turf looks dead. Call a plumber to fix underground outdoor leaks.

If you believe your consumption is due to a malfunctioning meter or other factor beyond your control, please call us and we will send out a crew to re-read your meter and be sure it is functioning properly.

_____STEP 2: CHECK ALL TOILETS

Pay close attention to your toilet plumbing, where leaks are often hardest to detect. A quick check can be made by placing a few drops of food coloring into the tank after it has filled and quieted, and watching for its appearance in the bowl. If there is a leak, then color should appear within 15-30 minutes. Even if no leak is detected, the test should be repeated, as such leaks are often intermittent. The Harwich Water Department has enclosed a few dye tablets for detecting toilet leaks. Also, if you hear the toilet refilling and no one has used it, there is a leak. A major toilet leak can waste 800 cubic feet of water a day.

LEAK DETECTION CHECKLIST**____STEP 3: CHECK ALL FAUCETS:**

The most common cause of water waste is the leaky faucet. Because a dripping faucet deceptively appears to be letting out very small amounts of water, this problem is often neglected. A fast drip from a faucet wastes about 265 gallons a day.

____STEP 4: UNDERGROUND LINES

If you have underground water lines that run to outbuildings or distant hose bibs, shut them off and try to isolate those fixtures then follow STEP 1. If the reading changes the following morning, that indicates a leak. Please call your plumber to make the needed repair.

____STEP 5: IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

If you have an irrigation system, some signs of irrigation leaks are as follows:

1. Taller, greener vegetation or moss growing around the sprinkler heads are signs of a damaged or dirty valve. Clean and replace worn parts.
2. Wet spots, mud, and eroding soil may indicate a broken pipe. Dry spots in your lawn could also be a sign that a sprinkler is damaged. To locate the source of the leak, dig around the sprinkler.
3. Wet spots on pavement also indicate possible leaks. Watch your sprinklers to determine which one is showering the pavement. Turn off the water, and check the sprinkler head and riser. Sprinklers spouting geysers indicate broken sprinkler heads and they should be replaced.

By following the above steps, you can isolate and pinpoint areas where leaks may occur and locate them with little difficulty.

We will be glad to assist you, permitting that personnel are available. Contact our office for further information at 508-362-6498.

LEAK DETECTION

A FINAL NOTE

Remember, leaks don't go away on their own, they only get worse with time. They cause property damage and can become expensive to repair. Take care of leaks as soon as they are identified, it saves water, money, and limits the complications of water damage. Smaller repairs can often be made by the homeowner other repairs require a licensed Plumber.

If you must leave your home empty for any length of time - on vacation, for instance - it might be a good idea to shut off your water valve so that if a serious leak develops while you're away, it will not flood the premises or run up a large water bill for you.

The shutoff or property valve is usually located inside your property, a few feet from the water meter. If a fixture or a pipe is damaged, your first move should be to shut off the supply using this valve. It's most important to keep the shutoff valve clear and within easy access, and in good working order at all times.

Barnstable Fire District Water Department
1841 Phinney's Lane
P.O. Box 546
Barnstable, MA 02630
Ph: 508-362-6498
Fax: 508-362-9616
Email: bfdcollector@barnstablefiredistrict.com
Website: www.barnstablefiredistrict.com