



## Have you received a high usage water bill?

There are many possible reasons for high utility bills. It is important to find the possible reasons for your high usage as soon as possible to lower your consumption. Here are some tips that may help you to save money, conserve water and avoid high bills.

### Why is my bill so high?

- Running/leaking toilets. Do you hear your toilet running? You may need to replace the innards of the toilet. Perhaps the flapper gets caught in the open position, the chain gets caught etc. You can buy a toilet repair kit at any local home improvement store. Depending on the water pressure in your home, a toilet can leak up to 1 gallon of water per minute. This can add up to 1,440 gallons per day.
- Leaking Faucets, dripping shower heads. Even the smallest of leaks can add up. Consider repairing or replacing these items. You may also want to install low-flow fixtures to reduce consumption.
- Do you have an irrigation system? You may have an irrigation head that is leaking. Even a small leak in your system can waste over 6,000 gallons of water per month. The length of time you run this system will also contribute to high water usage.
- Outside spigots. Is your outside spigot leaking/dripping? During the Summer months are you watering your lawn or gardens more frequently? Are you washing your cars? Outside watering, whether with a sprinkler or hose for 1 hour can use up to 400 gallons of water per hour. Did you forget to shut off the water to the hose or sprinkler for an extended period?
- Do you fill a pool with a garden hose? Do you pressure wash your home, deck or driveway? Doing so will greatly increase your usage. Pressure washing alone uses approximately 4 gallons a minute. Filling an average swimming pool can use 18,000 – 20,000 gallons of water to fill.
- Have you had visits from family or friends for an extended period? The average person uses between 80 - 100 gallons of household water per day.

### What can you do?

- Irrigation systems. These should be checked each Spring prior to use to check for any damage or leaks during the Winter months. Use of irrigation systems, depending on the pressure in your area, with a leak no larger than the thickness of a dime ( $1/32^{\text{nd}}$  of an inch) can add roughly 6,000 gallons per month or more while in use. Do not use automatic timed sprinklers. Turn them off by hand. Consider the use of rain sensors. They can extend the life span of your system and save money.
- Outside spigots. Check your hose for leaks at the connection to the spigot. If it leaks while the hose is in use, you may want to replace the washer and ensure a tight connection to the spigot.
- Running/leaking toilets or leaking faucets. A running/leaking toilet is one of the most common household leaks. Check your toilets by placing a few drops of food coloring to the back of the tank. Do not flush your toilet, let it sit for about 15 minutes. If after 15 minutes, the colored dye shows up in the bowl of the toilet, you have a leak. The seals on the back of the toilet may need to be repaired/replaced. Toilet leaks can vary from small to large,



constant or random, being heard or silent. Unless the toilet is being flushed, there should be no water movement. Most toilet leaks are caused by a faulty flush valve. A flapper valve should be replaced every 3-5 years. The 2<sup>nd</sup> most common toilet leak is caused by an improperly adjusted or broken fill valve. A leaking faucet is often the result of a bad rubber washer found under the handle. You can check with your local home improvement store for advice on repairing faucet leaks.

- Check your water usage on your own or call the Water Utility to review your usage. You can check your meter to see if it detects any leaks within your home. We would be happy to forward you instructions on how to read your meter. The handout will show you where to find your read which enables you to track your usage. It may show you a dripping faucet icon to indicate that it detects a leak. It can also show you the rate or the flow of water within your property. If everything is turned off within your property, then the rate or flow should read zero (0). If you see any read other than zero (0), you may want to consider contacting a plumber to help you find the cause of the leak or usage.

## Water Conservation Tips

- Owners of tenant occupied properties should schedule regular visits to their properties to check for issues and/or leaks.
- Use appliances efficiently. Adjust load settings for washing machines. Run a full dishwasher instead of handwashing.
- Check for leaks regularly and make repairs as soon as possible.
- Have your irrigation system inspected annually.
- Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Install low-flow plumbing fixtures.
- Use a rain barrel.
- Water use spikes in the Summer. Water your yard or garden wisely. Consider a water-smart landscape. Water in the early morning or after sunset to avoid evaporation.
- Take quick showers rather than baths. Showers use less water than baths.
- Only flush the toilet when necessary.
- Sweep driveways, sidewalks and steps rather than hose them off.
- Wash the car using a bucket of water or use a local car wash.