

How to Check for a Water Leak

1. Make sure water is not being used, inside or outside, before checking the meter (washing machine/dishwasher/etc.).
2. Go out to your water meter box which is typically near the sidewalk. The **box will have a metal, fiber glass or plastic lid**.



3. Remove the lid and look at the meter register. The meter will have a digital display or numbers and dials. Look for a small **red dial** or **triangle** on the analog meter or a + sign on the digital meter. This is a leak indicator.



Sensus SR11 Water Meter

Leak Indicator



Sensus IPERL Water Meter

Leak Indicator

4. If you are not using any water the leak indicator should be stationary. Watch it for a few minutes, if it's turning that means there is water moving through your meter. If there is usage, continue to follow the steps below.
5. Next, determine if the issue is in the house, or outside. To do this you will need to isolate your home by turning off your house valve, which is typically located on the side of your house or garage, and will have hose bib at the top. Below the hose bib, will be your house valve. Turn the valve completely off (this turns off the water to your home) then check the water meter again. If there is no usage (the red dial/triangle is no longer moving) then the leak is somewhere in the house. If the meter continues to spin, the leak is outside.
6. Try to determine where the issue is:
 - a. For outside leaks; walk the property and look for the obvious wet spot or areas that be may be unusually green with vegetation growth. Also check your irrigation system the next time it's running. Look for water shooting out of the emitters instead of dripping and make sure the system doesn't continue to run after the time it is set to turn off. Unfortunately, some leaks percolate through the ground and do not surface. If this is the case, you may want to consider hiring a plumber that has leak detection equipment

- b. For inside leaks; start with your toilets as they are responsible for the majority of high water use complaints. Remove the lid from the back of your toilet and check the water level in the toilet tank. It should be 1" below the over flow. Also, look for a calcium ring in the tank. Is there more than one line? If so, is the higher level at the same level as the overflow? This is an indicator that your float valve is intermittently out of adjustment and may need to be replaced. If the level is good, perform a dye test to determine if flappers need to be replaced, using either food coloring or dye tablets (we can provide you with tablets at our office). Approximately five minutes after the last flush, put a couple of drops of food coloring (or a dye tablet) in your tank and wait. If the colored water seeps into the toilet bowl you have a bad flapper.
 - i. Check for dripping faucets, wet flooring, wet walls, leaking water heaters and leaking washing machine hoses.
 - ii. If you have a water softener, make sure it is working properly and is not stuck on the rinse cycle.
7. If you are unable to locate the issue, contact a plumber.

**Additional items that should be considered for high usage and general conservation as well.*

1. Check landscape watering system valves and emitters periodically for leaks and keep sprinkler heads in good shape.
2. Adjust sprinklers so only the vegetation is watered and not the house, sidewalk, or street, etc.
3. Install covers on pools and spas and check for leaks around pumps.
4. More people in the home than usual taking baths and showers.
5. Doing more loads of laundry than usual.
6. Doing a landscape project or starting a new lawn or other projects that use water.
7. Washing vehicles more often than usual.
8. Know how much water your irrigation system uses when it runs and check periodically. If the consumption increases, and you haven't increased your water time, you can catch an issue before it becomes a bigger problem!
 - a. Before the irrigation system is scheduled to run, go out to your water meter and write down all of the numbers on the register.
 - b. Let the cycle run without using any additional water (dishwasher, shower, etc).
 - c. Once the cycle is complete, go back to your water meter and again, write down all the numbers on the register.
 - d. Subtract the 2nd set of numbers from the 1st and that will tell you how much water your irrigation uses when it runs.
 - e. Repeat this check periodically. If the consumption increases when you haven't made any changes (adding vegetation, increasing watering time) that indicates there is an issue with your system.