

IS YOUR WATER BILL UNUSUALLY HIGH THIS PERIOD?



There are many reasons that account for a spike in water usage however the most prevalent cause is a leak. Routinely checking household plumbing for leaks is paramount to keeping your water bill at its absolute lowest.

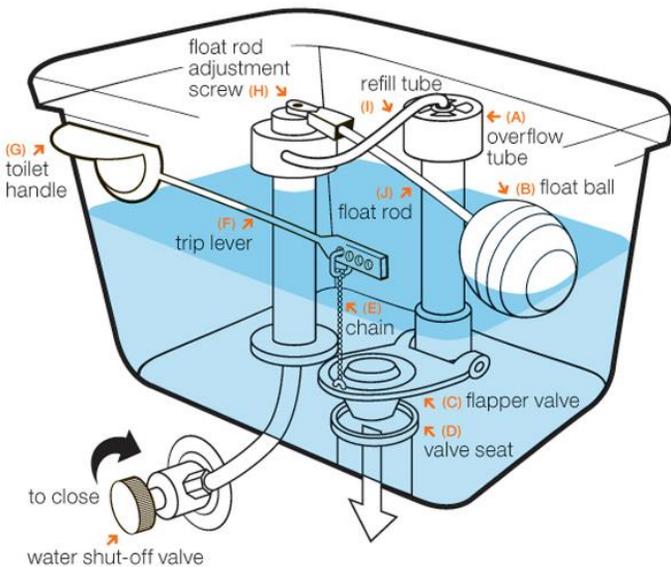
The most common cause for an unexpected high bill is an intermittent or continuously leaking toilet. And because toilets sometimes leak silently the wasted water may go unnoticed until you receive your quarterly-bill. We encourage for all of our customers check your toilets often for leaks and when found make repairs a priority.

IDENTIFYING TOILET LEAK: Non-toxic dye tablets are an easy way to determine if a leaking toilet is the cause of your high water bill. Sudbury Water District keeps a steady supply of dye-tablets on hand at our business office located at 199 Raymond Road. Stop by anytime during regular business hours to pick-up a free packet or two at home.

HOW TO USE LEAK DETECTING TABLETS: First remove the tank cover from the toilet and drop the dye-tablet in the tank. Wait about 15-30 minutes allowing for the tablet to dissolve, do not flush the toilet during the wait-period. If a blue-color appears in the bowl you have a leak and should contact a Massachusetts licensed plumber to make the necessary repairs. If there is no dye in the bowl, your toilet is most likely not the cause of the usage spike.



COMMON TOILET LEAKS



FLAPPER: The flapper is the rubber valve in the bottom of the tank that lifts up when the toilet is flushed. If the flapper is worn or cracked, it allows water to continuously flow from the tank into the toilet bowl without flushing.

FLUSH HANDLE: If the handle needs to be “jiggled” to keep the toilet from running, the flush level bar and chain (or the handle itself) may be sticking. Adjust the nut that secures it in the toilet tank. If that does not work, the handle may have to be replaced.

OVERFLOW TUBES: Ideally the water level should be set so that is about even with the fill line on the back of the toilet tank (approximately ½" below the overflow tube). If the water is too high in the toilet tank and is spilling into the overflow tube, the water level can be adjusted by turning the adjustment screw or by very gently bending the float arm down so that the water shuts off at a level below the overflow tube.

MY TOILET DOESN'T APPEAR TO BE LEAKING. HOW DO I DETERMINE IF I HAVE A LEAK ELSEWHERE? The easiest way to check if you have leaks is to watch your water meter for movement. Every water meter register is equipped with a flow indicator, if it is moving when water is not being used you have a leak:

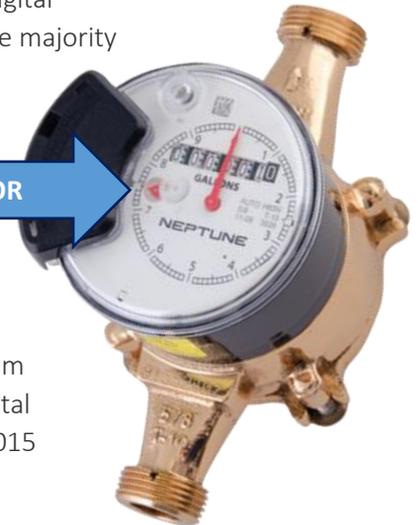
FIRST make sure all NO water is being used, including interior appliances such as dishwashers and washing machines. Then locate your water meter. It is typically found in the basement, if you do not have a basement it may be in a utility closet. Homes that are set far back from the road at least 150 feet may have a meter service pit outside of the home near the street connection. If this is the case, you will need to lift the pit cover to access the meter.

Sudbury Water District uses two-types of meter registers. Analog (pictured left) or Digital (pictured below.) Our registers read in gallons and are billed per thousand gallon. The majority of the homes in Sudbury have Analog registers.

ANALOG REGISTER: If you are “watching” your analog register to check for potential leaks, pay close attention to the flow indicator (the small red triangle) located on the face of the register. The triangle only moves when water is flowing through the meter. If you are NOT using water and the triangle is rotating chances are you have a leak and need to start investigating the cause.

In 2015 Sudbury Water District began phasing-out analog registers and replacing them with digital e-coder registers. Any newly constructed home (2015 forward) has a digital register and any service connection that has undergone meter-maintenance since 2015 Likely has been upgraded to e-coder technology.

DIGITAL E-CODER REGISTER: In order to use your e-coder register to check for potential leaks you first need to shine a flash light on the solar LCD panel for 5-seconds to activate the display. E-Coder registers or smart meters have the capability of storing water usage data for up to 96-days. The register records and stores a meter reading every 15-minutes or 96 reading blocks in a 24-hour period.



LCD DISPLAY

SOLAR PANEL



9-DIGIT METER READING

E-Coders are equipped with two very important icons, both are located on the display panel. First is the flow indicator or an arrow that shows the direction of the flow of water through the meter:

ARROW ON: Water in use

ARROW OFF: Water not in use

ARROW FLASHING: Water is running slowly

(-) ARROW Reverse flow or (+) ARROW Forward flow



You can determine if water is in use by watching the FLOW INDICATOR for two-minutes. Second is a LEAK  ICON. If a dripping faucet icon appears in the LCD display directly above the 9 digit meter reading you likely have a leak. A flashing icon indicates that water has been used in at least 50 of the 96 15-minute reading blocks recorded during the previous 24-hour period. A continuously ON icon indicates water activity has registered in all 96-reading blocks recorded during the previous 24-hours or identifies a continuous leak.

Remember leaks can happen anywhere in your house, internally or externally. If you suspect you have a leak there are a few places you should look first:

INTERNALLY

TOILET(S): Flapper, Flush Handle or Overflow Tubes

DRIPPING FAUCETS: Generally a result of a worn rubber washer

LEAKING PLUMBING FIXTURES: Check for signs of mold, dampness or deterioration under your sinks which are tell tail signs of leaking faucet fixtures

LEAKING APPLIANCES: Ice maker, washing machine and dishwasher

WATER SOFTNER: continuously cycling

HOT WATER TANK



EXTERNALLY

UNDERGROUND LAWN IRRIGATION SYSTEM: this includes a malfunctioning “main valve” (causing system to leak even when not operating), broken/clogged sprinkler heads and cracked underground irrigation pipes

SOAKER HOSE/DRIP IRRIGATION: including timer leaks, improperly closing and opening valves and damaged tubing

HOSE BIB CONNECTION

SWIMMING POOLS

SERVICE LINE LEAK (would only register water use if the meter is located outside of the home in a meter service pit)