

## HOW TO READ YOUR WATER METER

### Locate Your Water Meter

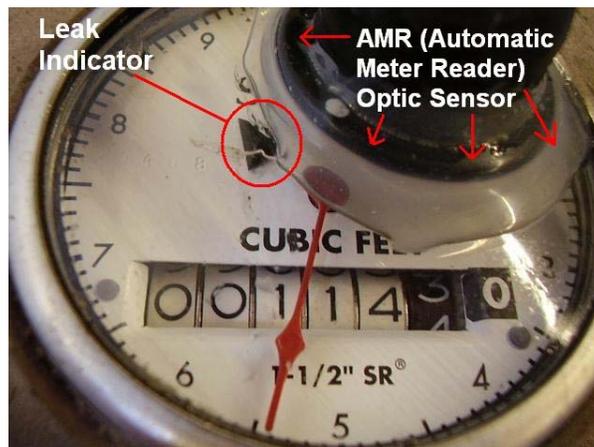
It is usually located in a polyfiber or concrete box in the front of the home near the street. You can use a large screwdriver to lift the meter box lid to access the water meter inside.

***NOTE:** When lifting the meter lid, be sure to lift it off slowly and carefully! The lid could be heavy, and sometimes an AMR unit is attached to the meter lid, making it awkward to lift off. Please be careful not to drop the meter box lid on the meter when removing or replacing it.*

Most household meters look like the one pictured here. Water is billed in units where 1 unit (1HCF) = 748 gallons of water. One cubic foot of water = 7.48 gallons. The water rate as of 7/1/12 is \$3.80 per unit (Hundred Cubic Feet).



The leak indicator on the face of the meter is used to show small amounts of water that are flowing through the meter. If you focus on one corner of the black triangle, it will turn when even the slightest amount of water passes through the meter. If everything inside and outside the house is turned off, (like washing machines, faucets, toilets) and the leak indicator is turning, there could be a leak somewhere inside or outside the house.



## How Do I Find A Water Leak In My Home?

First, you can determine if you have a leak by checking your water meter. About 90 percent of all residential water meters are located in the front sidewalk area or near the garage door.

Start by turning OFF all the water fixtures inside and outside the home, and make sure nobody else in the house is using any water (including flushing the toilet). Your water meter should have a little black triangle (“flow indicator”) on the white portion of the face. You can quickly identify a leak by just checking to see if the flow indicator is rotating when you know no water is in use.

If you determine there is a leak, below are basic steps to isolate and identify the leak:

1. Faucets or showerheads may have small drips that can result in hundreds of gallons of water being wasted each day. Check each fixture in the house to see if it is dripping. Most faucet or showerhead leaks are due to worn washers that can easily be replaced.
2. Toilet leaks are often the cause of wasted water and leaks. A “running” toilet does not always make noise. Sometimes they make no noise at all but are sending large amounts of water directly to the sanitary sewer system 24/7. To check your toilet for leaks, simply remove the tank lid and drop in several drops of food coloring. Wait 30 minutes. If the colored water appears in the bowl, you have a leak. If so, find out what components are defective and see that they are repaired as soon as possible. Repair kits are available at home improvement stores, or contact a plumber for assistance.
3. Check your sprinkler system. Shut off the anti-siphon valve that serves your sprinkler system. Check the black triangle (flow indicator) at the water meter. If the flow indicator stopped moving, the sprinkler system is the problem.
4. Check your water softener. Most water softeners have a bypass lever. Turn the lever to allow water to bypass the softener. Check the black triangle (flow indicator) at the meter. If the triangle is no longer spinning, you have isolated the leak to the water softener. You can check for leaking swamp coolers, water-cooled air conditioners, ice machines and reverse osmosis units by turning the bypass lever on each and checking the meter.
5. Check your main service line. First, you need to find your water shutoff valve. This is usually in your front yard near the garden hose, in your garage or near your water softener unit. Shut off the valve, cutting off all water to your home, and go into the house and turn on a faucet to make sure the water is off. Check the black triangle (flow indicator) at the meter. If the black triangle is spinning, the leak is between the shutoff valve and the water meter.

**Now what? If you have found a simple leak like a toilet flapper or kitchen faucet you may choose to fix the problem yourself. If you are not able to find or fix the leak, call a professional plumber.**

## Track Your Water Use (It's Easy!)

Keeping a log of your meter reads is the **ONLY** way to know what is happening in your household. It is simple to do and takes just a few minutes. It's a great activity to do with children.

When first starting, make the commitment to track a daily read for at least two weeks. After that you will have enough information to determine where you are using water and to make choices for your home. Simply write down your reading about the same time each day like so:

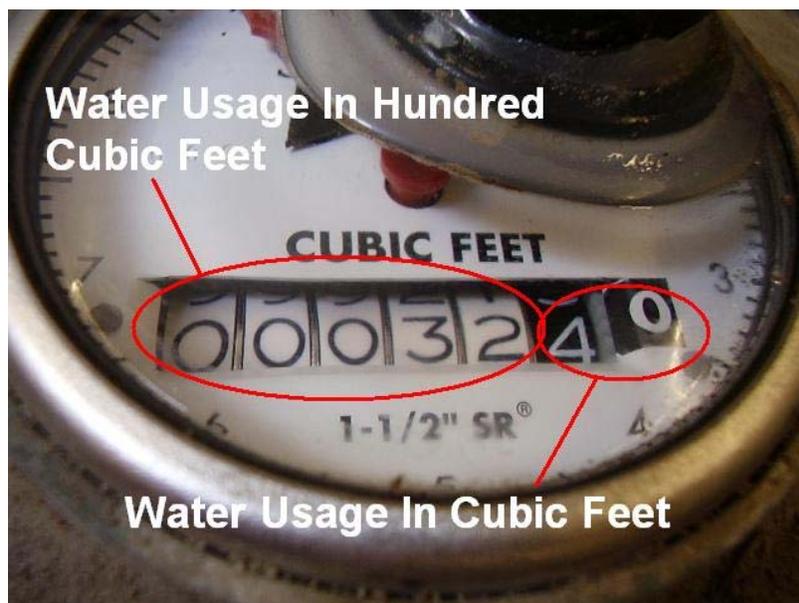
Sunday 1/1/15 at 5:30 pm 7267.50 (example)

The numbers in the black section represent "tenths" and "hundreds" of one Hundred Cubic Foot (HCF). One HCF is 748 gallons.

To convert your readings into HCF, subtract the most recent read from your earlier read: Reading #2 – Reading #1 = HCF used  
 $7298 - 7267 = 31$

To find your average daily water use, multiply your use in HCF by 748:  
Hundred Cubic Feet Used:  $31 \times 748 = 23,188$  gallons used

Then divide the number of days between readings:  
Gallons Used:  $23,188 / 39$  days = 594.6 Average Gallons / Day





# Where Does It All Go?

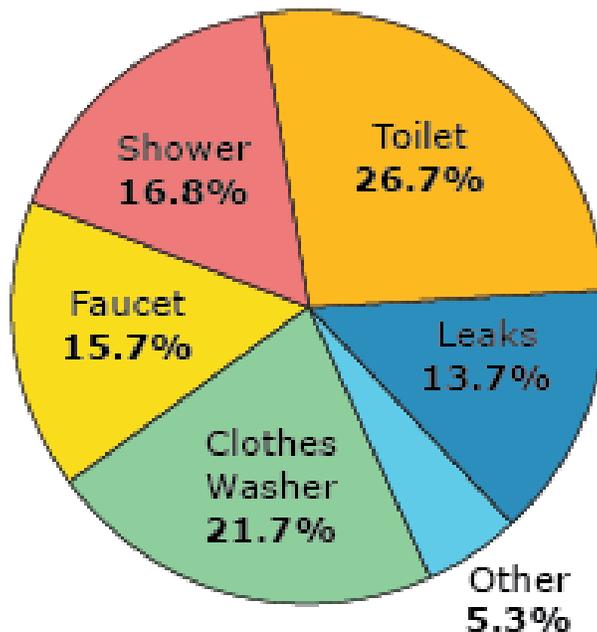
Many people think that the highest use of water is indoor use. In fact, the opposite is true, especially here in southern California. Experts estimate that anywhere from 50 to as high as 70% of household water use is OUTDOOR irrigation.

Visit [www.PortHuenemeGardens.org](http://www.PortHuenemeGardens.org) for more information on outdoor use savings, and [www.BeWaterWise.com](http://www.BeWaterWise.com) for rebate information. [www.SaveOurH2o.org](http://www.SaveOurH2o.org) also has great information.

Indoors, the toilet and the clothes washer are the highest users. Older toilets use between 3.5 and 7 gallons per flush. However, newer high-efficiency models use as little as 1.6 gallons per flush. A leaky toilet (which can be silent) can waste a gallon per minute or more and can cost from \$200 to \$1000 per billing period.

High-efficiency washing machines can conserve large amounts of water. Traditional models can use 50 gallons or more of water per load, but newer water conserving models use less than 27 gallons per load.

## How Much Water Do We Use?



Source: American Water Works Association Research Foundation, "Residential End Uses of Water." 1999

## Conservation Ideas and Tips

While you are waiting for water to heat up in the sink or shower use a bucket or a pitcher to save the water while you wait. Reuse the water for your garden or to flush the toilet.

Turn off the water while washing dishes or brushing your teeth or shaving.

Wait for full loads to use the dishwasher or clothes washer.

Use a broom to sweep your driveway or sidewalk instead of hosing with water.

Go to a car wash that recycles its water or wash it on the lawn and reduce one run time on your irrigation clock.

Put aerators on all your faucets. This can save up to 3 gallons per sink.

If you were already considering converting your lawn into an Ocean Friendly or Water Wise garden, now may be the time. Visit [www.PortHuenemeGardens.org](http://www.PortHuenemeGardens.org) for more information.

Allow your turf to grow twice as long. Longer, denser growth requires less water to maintain.

Cut your watering time by one to two minutes per cycle and watch your landscape for stress. Adjust accordingly. This can save about 10% water use across the board. Check for leaks and missing or broken heads. A missing or broken sprinkler head can waste thousands of gallons per day and increase your bill hundreds of dollars.

Make sure your irrigation water doesn't run off during the run cycle. Break up cycles into shorter run times to avoid overspray and/or run-off. Frequently monitor your system to ensure all water is spraying onto landscape, and not hardscape.

Upgrade older spray nozzles that are inefficient and can use up to 3 gallons per minute to conserving "rotator nozzles". All major irrigation supply companies sell these nozzles, which cost between \$4-5 each and can save 20-30% water consumption, if installed properly and your timer is set appropriately.

Even though it isn't raining; when we do have even a small rain event, like 1", you can capture that water in a rain barrel for later use. One thousand square feet of roof can shed up to 620 gallons of water in a 1" rain event. That's about 12 rain barrels!