



## ***WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY WATER BILL APPEARS UNUSUALLY HIGH?***

An unusually high water bill is most often caused by a leak in your plumbing or a change in water use. Below, you will find some important information that may help you in the event you receive a higher-than-normal water bill.

### *Some Common Causes of High Water Bills Are:*

- A leaking toilet or a toilet that continues to run after being flushed (see more information on the following page)
- A dripping faucet — a faucet drip can waste 20 gallons of water or more per day
- Filling or topping off a swimming pool
- Watering the lawn, new grass, or trees; also check for leaks in hoses, and outdoor spigots
- Watering flowers and gardens
- Kids home from school for summer vacations or school holidays; house guests
- Water-cooled air conditioners
- A broken water pipe or obvious leak. Check the pipes in the basement or crawlspace as well as the water heater
- Water softener problems – example: cycles continuously
- Running the water to avoid freezing water pipes during cold weather

*Here are some things you can check if you get a bill that is higher than usual*

### **Check for leaks**

Leaks, whether unseen or unfixed, can waste hundreds and even thousands of gallons of water. It is important to routinely check your plumbing and home for leaky faucets, toilets, and taps.

### **Outdoor and underground leaks**

Leaks can also occur in harder to find places, such as under your home, crawl spaces. Also, check outdoor spigots and irrigation systems, and look for wet spots in your yard, which may indicate a leak on your service line.

### **Toilet and faucet leaks**

The most common cause for a high water bill is running water from your toilet. A continuously running toilet can waste up to 200 gallons of water per day. This can cause a terrible increase to a family's typical water use, so fix toilet leaks as soon as possible. Some leaks are easy to find, such as a dripping faucet or running toilet. You can usually hear a running toilet, but not always.

#### **Do-it-yourself Toilet Assessment**

First check for the most common leak: a deteriorated or defective flush valve (flapper) ball at the bottom of the toilet tank. If it does not make a tight seal water will leak into the toilet bowl. To check for a leaky toilet, follow steps 1 thru 4:

1. Take the lid off of the tank behind the bowl, flush the toilet, and then wait for it to fully refill.
2. Put a few drops of dye or a colored dye tablet (food coloring works well) in the tank.
3. Wait at least 20 minutes; longer if you suspect it is a small leak.
4. If there is any color in the toilet bowl, there is a leak.

The second most common type of leak has to do with an improperly adjusted or broken fill (ballcock) valve. To check for this, take the lid off of the toilet tank, flush, and see if water is draining into the overflow tubes when the tank is full.







### **How to Read Your Meter to Check for Leaks**

You can check your plumbing system for undetected leaks by following these easy steps:

- Find your water meter and remove the lid.
- Turn off all running water and water-using appliances, and don't flush the toilet.
- Read the dial, or numbers, and record the reading.
- After 20-30 minutes, recheck the meter and record the reading.
- If the reading has changed, and no water has been turned on or used, a leak is occurring on your line. (Check all TOILETS for silent leaks by testing them with food coloring as outlined above. If the leak can't be found and fixed, you should call a plumber.)
- Replace the lid on water meter box.

## WATER LOSS CHART

This chart show the average loss of water based on the size of the leak at 50 psi. A leak as small as 1/32 of an inch can cause nearly 8,000 gallons of water loss in just 1 month!

Leak Size		Gallons Per Day	Gallons Per Month
	A dripping leak consumes:	15 gallons	450 gallons
	A 1/32 in. leak consumes:	264 gallons	7,920 gallons
	A 1/16 in. leak consumes:	943 gallons	28,300 gallons
	A 1/8 in. leak consumes:	3,806 gallons	114,200 gallons
	A 1/4 in. leak consumes:	15,226 gallons	456,800 gallons
	A 1/2 in. leak consumes:	60,900 gallons	1,827,000 gallons

## What's Next?

After a customer has found and repaired their leak, they should contact the Lee County PSA office at 276-346-7775 (option #2) and speak with a customer representative concerning the high water bill and options that may be available to assist.