



High Water Bill? Possible Causes.

An unexpectedly high water bill is most often caused by a leak or change in water use. Here are some common causes of high water bills:

- A leaking toilet, or a toilet that continues to run after being flushed
- A dripping faucet - which can drip more than 20 gallons each day
- Filling or topping off a swimming pool
- Watering the lawn, new grass, or trees - check for an open hose bib
- Kids at home for summer vacations/holidays - additional guests
- Water-cooled air conditioners
- Water softener problems - cycles continuously
- Running the water to avoid freezing pipes in cold weather
- A broken pipe or leak - check pipes in basements and crawlspaces

Check below for a few things to consider if your bill is higher than you expected.



A typical family of four will use between 4,000 and 5,000 gallons of water in a month, and summer months tend to have higher consumption due to lawns, pools, and gardening.

CHANGES IN YOUR WATER USE

Did you have house guests, water your lawn more than usual, or do anything out of the ordinary in the last month which would use more water? If so, this may account for an increase in your water bill.

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 leaks - whether outside taps or irrigation lines or indoors with your toilets and faucets.

OUTDOOR AND UNDERGROUND LEAKS

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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 massive amounts of water each day. That can double typical water use for some families, so toilet leaks should be fixed as soon as possible. You can usually hear a running toilet, but not always. See the do-it-yourself toilet assessment below for help in determining if this is the cause of your high water bill.



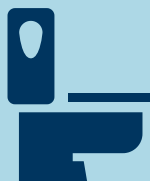
DO-IT-YOURSELF TOILET CHECK

First, check for the most common leak; a deteriorated or defected 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 this;

- Take the lid off the tank behind the bowl, flush the toilet, then wait for it to fully refill.
- Put a few drops of dye or a colored dye tablet (available at many hardware stores) in the tank.
- Wait 20 minutes - or longer if you suspect a smaller leak.
- If there is any color in the toilet bowl, then there is a leak.


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

Why is this important? A leaky toilet can be a massive contributor to a high water bill. We have seen continuously running toilets use 20,000 to 30,000 gallons of water in a month.





A CLOSER LOOK AT OTHER LEAKS

- A dripping leak consumes 15 gallons per day and 450 gallons per month.
 - A 1/32 inch leak consumes 264 gallons per day and 7,920 gallons per month.
 - A 1/16 inch leak consumes 934 gallons per day and 28,300 gallons per month.
 - A 1/8 inch leak consumes 3,806 gallons per day and 114,200 gallons per month.
 - A 1/4 inch leak consumes 15,226 gallons per day and 456,800 gallons per month.
 - A 1/2 inch leak consumes 60,900 gallons per day and 1,827,000 gallons per month.
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*Leaks can account for as much as **13.8%** of regular use for a typical family of four. Toilets generally account for 27% of monthly water use, while clothes washers (20.9%), showers (17.3%), and faucets (15.3%) make up the large remainder of traditional water usage.*

Even without leaks, we are often unaware of how much water we are using. The average hose uses five (5) gallons per minute. Irrigation uses twelve (12) gallons per minute. So an hour every other day of using the hose to water the lawn is another 4,500 gallons of water used. Same scenario for irrigation would be an additional 10,800 gallons of water usage.

