

# Common Reasons for High Water Consumption



## Change in Consumption Patterns

An increase in consumption compared to a previous bill, could be a result of changes in consumption patterns. If you are questioning your consumption for a specific period, you may want to first consider the following:

Did you have company at your home during the period that the billing covers which resulted in an increase in showers, dishes, flushing of toilets, etc.?

Did you fill your pool in the spring or during the summer months? Even filling a kiddie pool on a regular basis or turning on a sprinkler for children can result in a noticeable increase in consumption.

Are you watering your lawn during the summer months? Even watering once a week for 7 hours can use up to 8m<sup>3</sup> of water and represents a \$90 per month increase to your bill.

Changes in consumption patterns that result in increased consumption can significantly increase the amount that you are billed.

## Leaks in Your Home

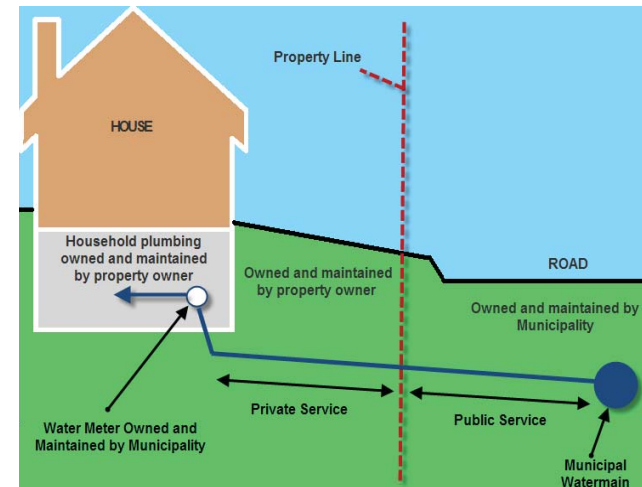
High water consumption can sometimes be a result of internal plumbing issues / leaks within your home. Even a small sized leak can result in a significant increase in water consumption and a large increase to your bill.

## Leaks in Your Home

The following chart shows the amount of water that can be lost as a result of a leak within your home and the impact that a leak can have on the amount that you are billed:

(1m <sup>3</sup> = 1000 Litres)	•	●	●
Leak Size	1/16 inch	1/8 inch	1/4 inch
Cubic Metres Per Day	3.6m <sup>3</sup>	14.4m <sup>3</sup>	56.7m <sup>3</sup>
Cubic Metres Per Month	108m <sup>3</sup>	432m <sup>3</sup>	1729m <sup>3</sup>
Cost Per Day	\$19	\$77	\$305
Cost Per Month	\$582	\$2,328	\$9,319

If the cause of the leak is not obvious, you may want to contact a plumber to help assist in finding the leak. It is not the City's responsibility to identify private plumbing issues within your home or business. The following diagram illustrates what the City is responsible for maintaining.



## How to Check for Leaks

Checking your bill regularly is one way to be alerted to a possible leak within your home. If your water consumption unexpectedly increases it could be the first warning that you have a leak. To determine if there is a leak, turn off all taps and appliances that use water in your home (fridge, dishwasher, washer, water softener etc). On most water meters, there is a small triangle or sun shaped leak detector. The leak detector will turn when even a small amount of water flows through the meter. When all water is turned off inside and outside the home, this detector should not turn. If it does, then it is an indication that there is a leak within your home. The following is an example of a water meter showing the location of the leak detector. Your water meter may look slightly different depending on the meter installed in your home.



## Leaking Toilets

High water consumption is often the result of leaking toilets. If you hear water running continuously after a toilet is flushed, it is likely that you have a leak. This is normally due to worn or misaligned parts. It is also possible to have a silent toilet leak. One way that you can test whether you have a toilet leak is by adding food colouring to the toilet tank. Don't flush the toilet and wait 20 minutes. If the food colouring ends up in the toilet bowl then you have a toilet leak. A toilet leak can waste up to 30m<sup>3</sup> of water per month and add approximately \$84 per month to your bill.

## Appliances

Use of older appliances (dishwashers, washing machines, water softeners) that are not as efficient as newer models can have an impact on the amount of water that you use. Depending on the age of the appliance, replacement may be something to consider. Malfunctioning appliances can also result in an increase in water use. Water softeners stuck in regeneration mode is a common cause of high consumption and can add hundreds of dollars to your bill. Automatic humidifiers connected to your furnace can also be a cause of high consumption. If you hear water running, you should try to determine the source.



## Meter Reading Error

Actual meter readings are taken on a regular basis to determine the amount of water used for a specified time period. Meter reads are used to bill water and wastewater consumption charges. Since meters are read manually, it is possible that the meter may have been misread. The easiest way to determine if this has occurred is to read your own meter. If the meter reads higher than the meter reading indicated on your bill, then the bill read is valid as the amount of water indicated has flowed through your meter and you have been billed correctly.


## Estimates

The City uses estimates when we are unable to gain access to a property to get an actual meter reading. This situation mostly occurs when the property only has an inside meter and there is no outside remote reader installed. Estimates are based on previous consumption history and fluctuations in consumption between bills could be a result of having an actual read taken following a previously estimated bill. The City's Public Works Department can install an outside remote reader free of charge if requested. Having an outside remote reader installed will ensure that your billings are based on actual reads.



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The water meter is typically found in the basement near your inside water shut off valve and/or your water heater.