

## Does Your Water Bill Seem High?

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If your current water bill seems high, consider these questions:

Did you use more water keeping the grass green?

- Did you go on vacation and leave someone else in charge of your lawn watering?
- Do you have an automatic sprinkler system with a broken head?
- Have you put in a new lawn, sprinkler system or pool recently?
- Were children playing with the water outside and accidentally left the hose running?
- Did you do extra loads of laundry before or after a vacation?
- Did you have friends or relatives staying with you?

Outdoor watering can double or triple your water bill. Consider installing a second meter for outside watering, as this usage is only charged the water rate with no additional charge for sewer use.

### Ideas to help you find water leaks and reduce your water consumption

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A high water bill may also indicate you have a leak. Even a small leak can waste enough water for you to notice an increase on your bill. Fix your leaks promptly to avoid paying for them each month.

Most leaks are easy to find, but some can go undetected. Here are some ideas to help find a water leak in your home:

Here are some of the first things to do. You can check the meter yourself. The meter is usually in the basement. Make sure all faucets, the washing machine and any other appliance that uses water are off. Look at the top of the meter, there will be a row of numbers, similar to an odometer on a car. (Right next to this, there is smaller dial (RED) that spins when water is passing through the meter. If this dial is not moving then you probably do not have a leak. If this dial is moving (and you have confirmed all water is turned off in the home) then there is a leak.

### Toilets

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Having a leaky flush mechanism can waste as much as 500 gallons per day!

- Listen and look for running water.
- Put a few drops of food coloring into the tank. If color shows up in the bowl within 30 minutes, the valve or support assembly may need to be replaced.
- See if the ball valve drops squarely into the drain opening. If not, clean it out or replace the ball valve if it is worn.
- Check the flush handle to see if it is stuck in the flush position.
- Bend the float arm to lower the water level to at least one-half inch below the top of the overflow tube.
- Replace the overflow tube if it has holes below the water level.
- Also, consider upgrading to a low-flow toilet if yours was installed before 1993; old toilets may be inefficient, using 2 to 3 more gallons of water per flush.

## **Faucets, Bathtubs and Showers**

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Think about switching your showerhead. While old showerheads can pour out 5 gallons of water every minute, the new low-flow showerheads use just 1.5 to 2.5 gallons per minute, cutting your water use by 50% or more.

Before you buy: Test your current showerhead by placing a 1-gallon bucket in the tub and turning on the tap. If it takes less than 20 seconds to fill, you should consider getting a new showerhead. These showerheads conserve up to 30,000 gallons of water annually; a family of four could save over \$200.00 a year.

Also:

- Replace worn gaskets and washers.
- Replace washer less faucets.
- Tighten waterline connections and valves.

## **Water Softeners (*Not necessary for MHOG Customers*)**

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Water softeners are not necessary for customers with MHOG water. Further softening MHOG water could be corrosive to your plumbing.

Have you noticed that you are going through more salt than normal? This is an indication that the softener may be regenerating too frequently.

Look for water drips or stains underneath or around the softener.

## **Furnace Humidifier**

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Check for water leaks.

## **Water Heater**

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Replace the pressure and temperature valve, if leaking.

Tighten the drain valve.

## **Dishwasher/Clothes Washer**

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The average household will save approximately 5,000 gallons of water per year, compared to washing dishes by hand; assuming you don't use too much water pre-rinsing while loading the machine. Running the dishwasher once a day saves water.

Check that the fill hose hangs straight down and is kink free; the pressure of a kink can wear down the rubber and result in holes. If you can't remember how old your washing machine's hose is, it's probably time to replace it; most should be changed every three to five years. Although hoses cost only \$10 to \$20 at hardware stores, hose failures cause more than \$150 million in damage to U.S. homes each year.

Also, look for water drips or stains underneath or in back of the machine.

## Outside Faucets

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Replace worn gaskets and washers.

Make sure all hoses are off.

To protect against freezing, always disconnect hoses and shut inside valves to outside faucets during the winter months.

## Sprinkler System

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Take a walk through the yard and see if you notice any muddy or spongy spots. There may be a small crack in your underground irrigation line. Do not use the system for a few days. If the spot is still wet that may be where the leak is. Another way to tell is, shut the sprinkler system off. Does the water meter still move? If it does, the system is leaking. Also:

- Have system set to manual, only water when needed.
- Have a rain gauge installed; your system will not start while it is raining.
- Winterize your sprinkler system according to the system's instructions.
- Check for any damage to sprinkler heads.
- Make sure that all drain plugs are closed.

If you are not familiar with performing the above procedures, consult with a qualified plumber to avoid damage to your plumbing system.

If you need additional assistance, please don't hesitate to call us at 800-881-4109.