

Knowing Your Water Use Rate Is A First Step To Conservation

How To Read Your Meter

Look at your meter to see how easy it is to read.

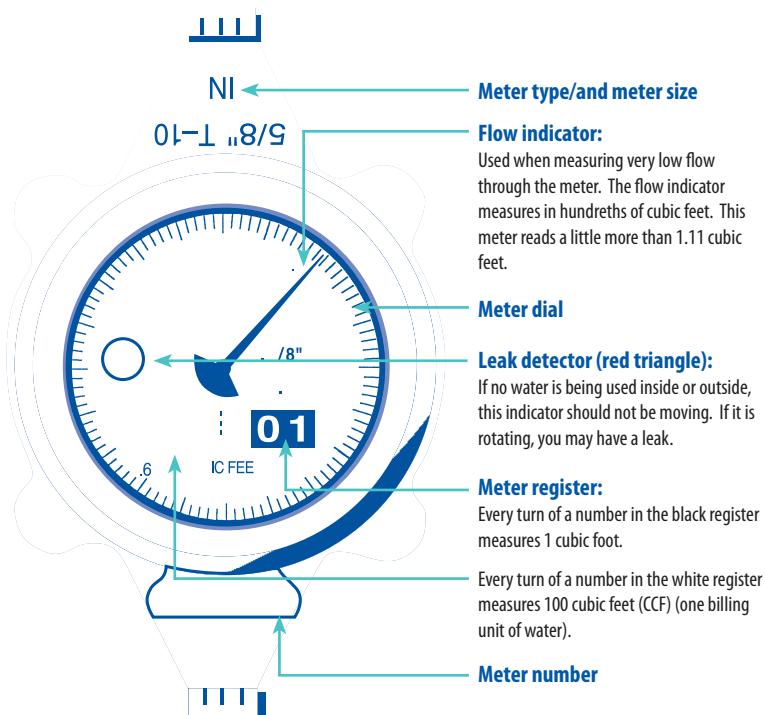
Every Tampa Water Department customer has one or more water meters that measure the amount of water passing through in units called cubic feet. One cubic foot of water equals 7.48 gallons. The Tampa Water Department meters water in units equal to 100 cubic feet (CCF) or 748 gallons.

Determining Your Water Usage

- Use the following example to help read your meter.
- Select a day to take an initial water meter reading. Write down the numbers you see on the meter dial that indicate the total amount of water that has passed through your water meter at that particular moment.
Example: 007640
- After a period of time has passed (a day or a week, for example), read your meter again at approximately the same time of day.
Example: 008330
- Subtract the first reading from the second reading. This is your water usage for the period.
Example: 008330 - 007640 = 690
- The 690 figure indicates that 690 cubic feet of water has been used during the time period between the two readings. This is equal to 6.9 units, or approximately 5,161 gallons, of water.
- The average Tampa Water Department single-family residential customer uses about 8 units of water per month. (Refer to the "Schedule of Rates" brochure to determine the billing rate for each unit of water used.) For information about water rates and fees please call (813) 274-8811.

Where To Look On The Meter

- Locate the white numbers on the right side of the meter dial (black background). Each turn of a number in the black register indicates that one cubic foot unit of water has passed through the meter.
- Locate the black numbers on the left side of the meter dial (white background). Each turn of a number in the white register indicates that 100 cubic feet of water has passed through the meter.
- The meter dial is read like an automobile odometer, straight from left to right.



Do You Have A Leak?

You can use your water meter to help determine if you have a leak. Make sure no water is being used inside or outside (no clothes washer filling, no shower running, no watering outdoors, etc.). Locate your water meter box, carefully remove the cover and lift the top of the meter. Find the leak detector (the small red triangle on the face of the meter dial). If all your water sources are off and the leak detector is rotating, you may have a leak. Leaks can waste thousands of gallons of water in just a few days. It pays to fix leaks promptly.

A small leak, about the size of the head of a pin, dripping at one drop per second can add up to 7 gallons of water per day. A large leak, the kind most often found in toilets, can waste 200 gallons of water or more per day! Check out the following when you suspect a leak:

Toilets

The trouble with leaking toilets is you don't always hear them leaking. Slow, silent toilet leaks are quite common. Checking regularly for toilet leaks is not a part of most people's normal routine, but it should be. We recommend checking quarterly for toilet leaks.

The fastest way to check for a toilet leak is to put a couple of drops of dark food coloring in the toilet tank. Remember, don't flush the toilet during this test.

Wait at least 15 minutes, then check the water in the toilet bowl. If color has traveled into the bowl, the toilet tank is leaking.

The most common causes of a leaking toilet are:

- water running into the overflow tube;
- a warped or cracked flapper.

If water running into the overflow tube is the source of the problem, adjust the float level control screw so that the water shuts off at a half inch below the overflow pipe.

If the flapper is warped or cracked, make sure to replace it with one that matches the brand and model of the toilet so the seal is tight. Costs for flappers generally run in the \$5 to \$10 range. Replacement is easy: just follow the installation instructions on the package. A word of caution — generic flappers may not seal properly and could cause additional water waste.



Faucets

Leaking faucets can be big water wasters. Check faucets in the bathroom and kitchen periodically for leaks. A faucet dripping at just one small drop per second can waste 7 gallons per day or more than 2,500 gallons per year! Worn washers are most often the cause of dripping faucets.



Sprinkler Systems

Broken sprinkler heads or damaged underground water pipes are common sources of leaks in sprinkler systems. Lawn mowers and car tires can break sprinkler heads, so it is important to watch your system run at least once per month to spot any problems early. Look for wet depressions in grass and plant areas that may indicate broken pipes.

Leaks are usually easy to fix. Do-it-yourself books with easy-to-follow instructions are available at libraries, bookstores and home improvement stores. If the leak detector on your meter is rotating and these most likely sources have checked out okay, you may need the services of a licensed plumber to check for leaks and underground breaks in your service pipes.



Water Department

306 E. Jackson Street • 5E • Tampa, Florida 33602
(813) 274-8121 • www.TampaGov.net/water