



# How to Read Your Meter and Check for Leaks

*How much water do you use in a day?*

*How much water do you use to water your yard?*

*Do you have a leak?*

There are several reasons why you'd want to be able to locate and read your water meter. By reading your meter at the beginning and the end of the day (or irrigation cycle) you can compare the two totals to tell how much water you and your family used. The second reason is to check for leaks. Here are some hints to help you read your water meter and check for leaks.

## STEP 1: Locate Your Meter

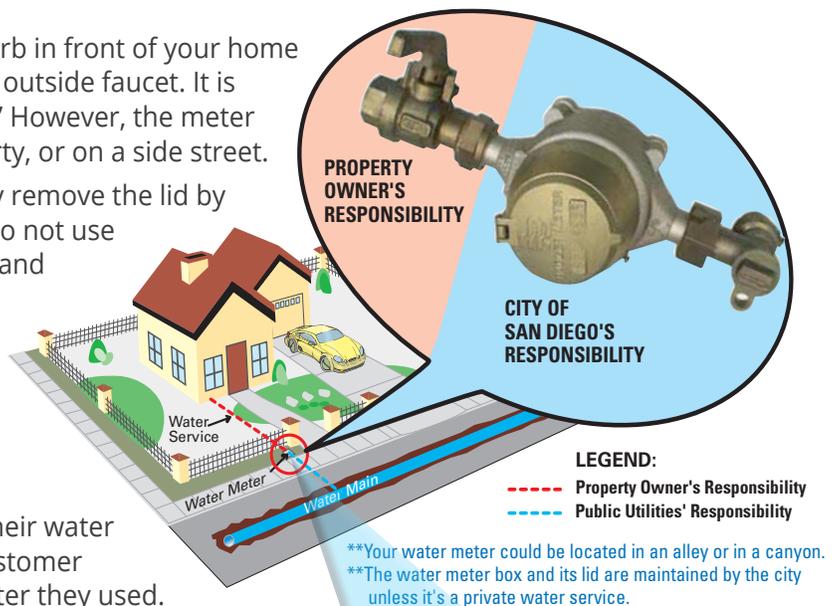
Your water meter is generally located near the curb in front of your home or place of business in a direct line with the main outside faucet. It is housed in a concrete box usually marked "water." However, the meter may also be located in an alley behind the property, or on a side street.

The box is covered with a removable lid. Carefully remove the lid by using a tool such as a large screwdriver. Please, do not use your fingers. Insert the tool into one of the holes and pry the lid off. Visually examine the area around the meter to make sure there are no harmful insects or other animals. You may need to clean out around the meter.

## STEP 2: Read Your Water Meter

All customers within the City of San Diego have their water use measured by a meter. This results in each customer paying their share based upon the amount of water they used.

All City of San Diego meters measure water in cubic feet (one cubic foot equals about 7.5 gallons). Charges for the amount of water consumed are based on the number of units of 100 cubic feet (748.5 gallons) you use during a billing period.



LEAKS INDICATOR

## How to Read Your Meter

The meter is similar to the odometer in your car. On the meter to the left, the reading is taken from the figures shown above the words CUBIC FEET. The meter reads 81710 which is the total number of cubic feet of water recorded since the meter was installed. Because water is measured in units of 100 cubic feet, the meter reader discards the last two numbers (the ones with the black background). So, this reading would actually be 817.\*

*\*NOTE: The new meters may have four numbers with black background.*



If you have your water bill and it shows a meter reading of 803 the difference between the current read (817) and the previous read (803) would be the amount of water you used since the date the meter was read. You would have used 14 Hundred Cubic Feet (HCF). 14 HCF equals 14 x 748.5 gallons or 10,479 gallons.

Meter Information					
Serial Number	Size	Billing Days	Previous Read	Current Read	HCF Used
12345678	3/4	62	785	803	18

**1 HCF = 748 Gallons**

**Average Gallons per Day: 217**

### Find out how much water you use in one day

If you read your meter at 10 am in the morning and it reads: 56314. The following day at 10 am you read the meter again and it reads: 56321. The difference between the two reads is 7 Cubic Feet (CF).

You have used 52.5 gallons in 24 hours. You can do the same thing to determine how much water you use to fill the pool, water the lawn or wash a load of clothes!

$$\begin{array}{r}
 56321 \\
 - 56314 \\
 \hline
 7 \text{ CF}
 \end{array}
 \qquad
 \begin{array}{r}
 1 \text{ CF} = 7.5 \text{ gallons} \\
 \times 7 \text{ CF} \\
 \hline
 52.5 \text{ gallons}
 \end{array}$$

### STEP 3: Check for leaks:

For leak detection, make sure no water is being used by appliances. This includes ice maker, dish washer, clothes washer, irrigation and water softener. Then look at your meter. You should see a large hand and small triangle or star. The star or triangle indicates very small amounts of water movement. Observe it carefully for a few minutes to see if it has any movement. If it moves slowly you have a slow leak. If it starts and then stops you probably have a leaking toilet or pool/spa that refills when the water level drops.

Next watch the big hand. It is best to record the precise position of the big hand on the dial face (take a picture or mark with wax pencil). Check the position of the meter dial after 15 minutes, if the dial hasn't moved that is a good sign! Still wondering if you have a leak? Record the position of the dial and leave all water off for four or more hours. If the dial has moved, start checking hose connections, faucets and the toilets for water leaks. If you have everything turned off and are sure the toilets and connections aren't leaking and yet the dials are still turning, you may have a hidden leak in an underground pipe. Look for excessive moisture in your landscape or unusual cracks in pavement or flooring. If you believe this is the case, you may need to call a plumber for assistance.

Remember: a little leak adds up! A slow drip can add up to 15-20 gallons a day and a faucet that does not fully close can waste 100 gallons a day. Toilet leaks grow worse with time and can waste hundreds of gallons of water a day. Your home improvement center may be able to assist you with small repairs.

For more information and informative videos visit: [www.home-water-works.org/indoor-use/leaks](http://www.home-water-works.org/indoor-use/leaks).



Leak indicator



**The City of San Diego offers water conservation services, including its Residential Water Survey, Multi-Family Survey, Commercial Survey and Water-Wise Business Survey programs to assist customers in understanding their water use. These free programs are available to property owners and tenants located within the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department's service area.**

**Visit [wastenowater.org](http://wastenowater.org) for more details regarding survey programs. For a survey appointment and more information, call (619) 570-1999, or email [watersurvey@sandiego.gov](mailto:watersurvey@sandiego.gov).**