

# CAUSES OF HIGH WATER BILLS

not due to leaks:

## IS IT A SEASONAL INCREASE?

Summers are often marked by:

- Watering lawn, gardens, new sod, and trees
- Washing cars
- Filling pools
- Using water-cooled air conditioning units
- Using pressure washers

Were there more people at home for work/school, spring break, the holidays, or other reasons?

## FIRST WATER BILL OF THE NEW YEAR?

Water and sewer charges often increase annually. If you are using the same amount of water but paying more, check to determine if there was a rate increase from one bill to the next.

## ARE YOU PAYING MORE FOR SEWER CHARGES?

For single and two-family homes, sewer use rates are set in the winter when use is typically low. That rate is then capped for the rest of the year. If you had unusually high winter use or a leak during the sewer-setting winter months, your sewer setting rate will be higher than normal.

**DID YOU INCUR OTHER CHARGES?** Late fees? Does this bill include a previous balance? Are the charges related to your city services? (Street lights, recycling, ect.)

If none of these help explain a higher bill, you may have a leak! **READ MORE** to learn how to check your toilet/meter to determine if you have a leak.

# LOCATING & READING YOUR WATER METER

Your meter is located inside your home, about one foot off of the floor in your basement. It could also be in a crawl space, pit in the floor, or utility room.

## READING YOUR METER

Your display panel will alternate screens between total water use and rate of flow.

You will need a flashlight!




Use flashlight to turn on the display panel. Shine the light on the flashlight icon, or on some models the energy cell.

Read all the numbers left to right to obtain a water meter reading.



 **Flow Indicator:** Visible only when water is running.

 **Leak Detector:** This indicates a possible leak. It notes that water has been used throughout most of the day. If no lead is detected, the faucet image will not appear.

**Rate Indicator:** "RATE" means the rate of water flowing through your water meter. The rate is measured in cubic feet per minute.

RATE

Find out how to use your water meter to detect toilet leaks: [tinyurl.com/waterMeterTest](http://tinyurl.com/waterMeterTest)



# Are Water Leaks Costing You Money?



# FINDING & FIXING LEAKS

in your home and identifying other causes of high water bills

## LEARN MORE!

[WWW.STPAUL.GOV/WATER](http://WWW.STPAUL.GOV/WATER)

1900 Rice Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55113  
(651) 266-6350  
[waterinquiries@stpaul.gov](mailto:waterinquiries@stpaul.gov)



# FINDING THE LEAKS

## Checking for Toilet Leaks



1. Take the lid off the toilet tank.
2. Put a few drops of food coloring or a few dye tablets in the toilet tank.
3. Stir the water in the tank with a long spoon or stick.
4. Do not flush or use the toilet.
5. Wait at least 25-30 minutes for dye tabs (wait an hour if using food coloring)
6. Look in the bowl. If the coloring has seeped from the tank into the bowl, you have a toilet leak.

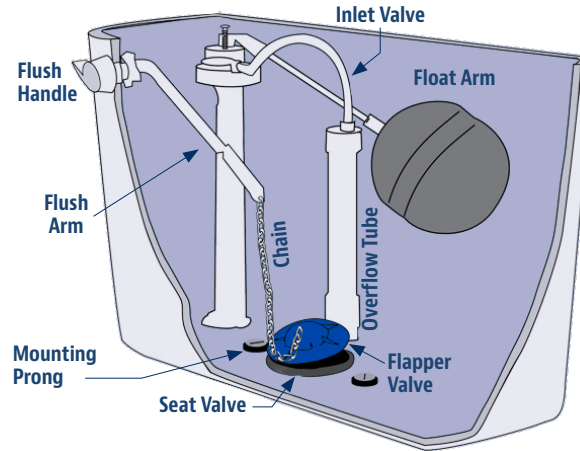
## OTHER POTENTIAL LEAKS

While toilets are the most likely cause of leaks in the home, they are not the only culprit. If you have already tested your toilets for leaks, check these other common areas:

- Faucets/shower heads
- Bath tubs/laundry room tubs
- Outdoor sprinkler systems
- Outdoor spigots (dripping or pipe burst due to freeze/thaw)
- Whole house humidifiers attached to the furnace
- Water softeners that regenerate constantly
- Water heaters

# FIXING TOILET LEAKS

Toilet leaks can waste hundreds, even thousands of gallons of water a day, which can be expensive!



## Evaluate the Flapper

Old or worn-out toilet flappers are a common cause of leaks. Flappers are inexpensive rubber parts that can build up minerals or breakdown over time.

## Replacing a flapper can be a quick and easy fix!

Wearing a disposable glove, reach in to touch the flapper at the bottom of the tank. If it is warped or black residue rubs off, you should replace the flapper.

## Do you have to jiggle the handle to make the toilet stop running?

You might need to adjust the chain so the flapper sits in the valve seat properly.

## OTHER TIPS:

- If the **fill valve/inlet** valve is not set properly or has malfunctioned this may cause a hiss or a squeal when filling. Try adjusting the fill valve/inlet otherwise it may need to be replaced.
- If water continuously fills into the tank and drains down the overflow tube, the float may need to be adjusted. If adjusting the float does not stop the issue, a new fill valve/inlet may be needed.

# FACTS ON LEAKS



10% of homes have leaks that **WASTE 90 GALLONS** or more per day

A leaky faucet dripping at the rate of **one drip per second** can waste more than

**3,000 Gallons** per year

Minor water leaks account for nearly



1 Trillion gallons of wasted water each year

A shower leaking at **10 DRIPS** per minute



wastes more than **500 GALLONS** per year

Replace old toilets with WaterSense models and save

**13,000** Gallons

of water for the average family



Annual household water use in nearly



**SAVE 10%** on your water bills



Data Source: EPA

Note: This advice is general. SPRWS recommends contacting a licensed plumber for professional advice if you require additional assistance.