



USING YOUR WATER METER TO CHECK FOR LEAKS

Hi, my name is Jeff and today I'm representing the Regional Water Providers Consortium and I'm going to show you how you can use your water meter to help to determine whether or not you have a leak in your house.

The first thing you need to do is find out where the meter is located. It could be in the yard or it could be in the sidewalk. In this particular location the meter is in the box between the sidewalk and the curb. If you have a screwdriver or a pair of pliers you want to grab them so that you can open up the meter box. Now that we have access to the meter, we want to take a look at it by moving the cap up off the face of the meter. Now you're going to see it has an odometer style readout. This is what your meter reader reads when he goes to do your billing. You're also going to see a leak indicator. In this particular meter it happens to be a red triangle. But it could be circular, it could be blue, it could be located in a different spot on the meter face. But if that is turning, that means that there is water moving through the meter. Some meters don't have a leak indicator and they may have a sweep hand as this one does also.

The sweep hand moves at a much slower pace than the leak indicator. So to determine whether or not there is water moving through the meter, you might want to mark the sweep hand, come back in 20 minutes and see if it's moved. If it has, then there's water moving through the meter.

In this case there is water moving through the meter, so the thing we want to do is make sure that there is no water on or turned on or being used in the home. So let's go do that right now.

Before we go inside, you want to make sure that all the water use outside is turned off as well. So that includes hose bibs and if you have an automatic irrigation system, you'll want to make sure that that system is shut down as well. Let's go inside.

Now that we're in the house we want to make sure all the water is off, the faucets, the showers, and especially water using equipment like your dishwasher, your clothes washer, and if you happen to have a water softener make sure it's not cycling. Now that we've made sure all the water is off in the house, let's go back out and check the meter.

Now that we've made sure that all the water is off in the house, we want to take another look at the meter. So we take a look and we see that leak indicator is still turning. So now we know there's still water moving through the system. We want to isolate where the leak might be. To do that we need to find the main shutoff valve. So let's go do that now. The water shutoff valve can be located outside near the foundation, it could be in the garage, some houses don't even actually have a valve. But in this case we found the shutoff valve in the basement. We're going to go ahead and turn that valve off. Just be aware that some valves are old and their rusty and they could leak once you start turning them. So just be aware of that.

Now that we've turned the water off, we want to go and find a faucet that is as far away from the valve as we can, open it up to make sure that the valve is doing its job and that the water really is shut off. Once we've done that, we'll go back out to the meter and see if the leak indicator is still turning.

Now that we're back at the meter, we want to take a look at the leak indicator and see if it's still turning. If the indicator is not turning, you probably have an issue in the plumbing in your house with one of your fixtures, perhaps a toilet. If it is still turning however, you'll want to look for a problem in the underground piping.

Now your water utility can help you with information about your water usage, but it is the homeowner's responsibility to make sure that they make any repairs and fix any problems from the meter up to and throughout the house. Some of the problems you can tackle yourself while some you'll want to call a professional for help.

A couple more things: Don't forget to put the meter lid back on the meter box so it's not a hazard to others and of course don't forget to turn your water back on.

For more water conservation tips see our website: www.conserveh2o.org

The instructional videos listed on our website are general guidelines. The Regional Water Providers Consortium will not be responsible for any damage to your home, landscape, or appliances from following the procedures in these videos. If you have concerns doing any of this work yourself, you may wish to seek the services of a professional plumber or contractor.