

How to read your meter and check for leaks

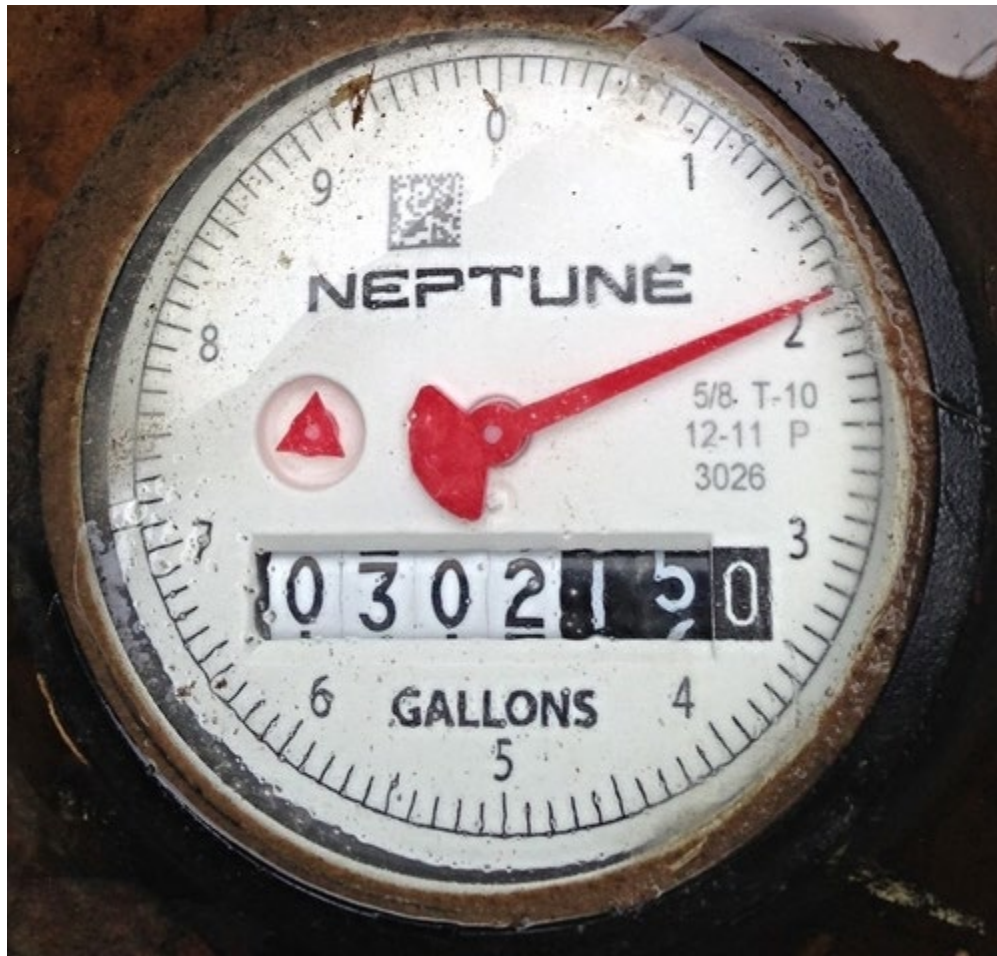
Your water meter is read from left to right, and in gallons. Some meters have 4 to 5 digits, some have up to 9. There may be 1 or 2 “fixed” numbers on the farthest right; these should be included in reads as well. Only water that passes through a meter will be measured.

STEP 1: LOCATE YOUR METER



Your water meter is generally located near the curb in front of your home. Outside meters are typically housed in a concrete box usually marked "water" (as shown in the photo) or in a meter pit with a cast iron lid. Carefully remove the lid by using a tool such as a large screwdriver or pliers. Visually examine the area around the meter to make sure there are no harmful insects or other animals. Meter readers do not open the meter box to read your meter but do so with an electronic reader that matches to your individual meter number. Therefore, it is possible that your meter box may have become home to insects, spiders, frogs, or snakes.

STEP 2: READ YOUR METER



Meter Read: 302150

Size of Meter: 5/8

In the image to the left, the meter reading is 302150. Please note that this reading includes all of the water that has passed through the meter since installation. The monthly water bill is based on the newest meter reading minus the previous meter reading. If the meter in this example read 301150 last month, the monthly water consumption would be 302150-301150, or 1000 units.

You may need to determine the size of the meter (if you are designing a new irrigation system, for example). In this case, it is noted on the right hand side of the dial as 5/8". Water meters typically come in the following sizes: 5/8", 3/4", 1", 1.5" and 2". It is unusual to find anything larger than a 1.5" meter on a single-family home. The most common sizes are 5/8" and 3/4".

LEAK DETECTION



Meter A



Meter B

Your meter is equipped with a “test” hand that rotates in a clockwise direction when water is being used.

On meter “A”, the test hand is a black triangle above the read numbers.

On meter "B" the test hand is a small red knob located in the bottom right hand corner of the meter.

The meter is designed to detect even the smallest amount of usage frequently associated with small leaks. To check for leaks, turn off all faucets and equipment that use water. Watch the "test" hand very closely. If there is any movement in the "test" hand and you are sure everything that uses water has been turned off, that is an indication that there is a leak. The speed at which the "test" hand moves indicates how large the leak is.

FINDING THE LEAK

Now that you have found that there is a leak, the next step is finding the source of the leak and stopping it. Continuous leaks as small as 1/16th of an inch can cause water waste as much as 24,667 gallons in a month. A dripping faucet can waste 3 gallons a day or 1095 gallons a year. Finding and repairing a leak saves water and money.

Water leaks come in many sizes and varieties. Some water leaks require the expertise of a plumber and the resident can easily repair others. Some of the most common sources of water leaking are sprinkler systems, toilets and faucets. Below are a few tips to try before calling a plumber.

- Add a few drops of food coloring to the tank of the toilet. Wait a few minutes and then look for any color seeping into the bowl. If there is color, then the toilet is leaking.
- While slowly walking the trench line between your meter and your home, be aware of any "squishy" areas.
- Be aware of any areas of the yard that are unusually green.