Is your home water tight? Use your water meter to check!

Want to know if your home is water tight? Read your meter! Your water meter can alert you to water line and toilet leaks. Doing the investigating work before calling the plumber can save you time and money.

Checking for leaks using your meter:
1. Make sure no water is being used inside or outside the house. Don't forget the ice maker.
2. Find your meter box. The residential meters in Lakewood are located next to the curb. Your meter may be in your neighbor's front yard. Yours is the meter closest to your home.
3. Open the meter box lid. Place a screwdriver in the opening pull up and slide the top open. You don't have to lift! Don't be surprised to find bugs in the box. They like the dark moist environment.
4. Flip open the lid on the meter.
5. Find the blue triangle on the meter's face. This is a low flow and leak detector. (Some low flow indicators are black or may have a star shape.) Is it moving? If so you have a leak.
6. Track the location of the leak. Close the house valve, which is normally located on the front of the house near the front faucet.
7. Go back to the meter. Is the triangle still moving? If so the leak is located between the meter and the house. If the blue triangle stopped moving the leak is inside.
8. Check all the faucets inside and out for drips. Don't forget to look under all the sinks for supply line drips.
9. Check the toilets. Some toilet leaks are intermittent. Place a few drops of food coloring in the toilet tank and wait about 20 minutes. If the coloring finds its way into the bowl (without flushing) the toilet is leaking. Replacement kits for toilet flush valves can be found at any home improvement store, like Home Depot. Most toilets use a $5.00 rubber flapper.
10. Still can't find the drips? The plumbing in most Lakewood homes is located in the crawl space under the house. Take a look.
11. Once you've located the leak you can fix it yourself or call a plumber. Either way you're armed with information to talk like a plumbing pro.

What if your water meter doesn't have a leak indicator? You can check for leaks using the red sweep hand on the meter face.
1. Draw a line to mark the location of the red sweep hand with a Post It Note and pencil.
2. Wait 20 minutes.
3. Recheck the location of the sweep hand. Did it move? If so you have a leak. Follow the rest of the steps outlined above to locate the leak.

What to calculate the amount of watering leaking?
- Each mark on the dial is worth 0.0748 gallons.
- Count the number of marks between your line and new position of the sweep hand. (The tenths are marked on the dial.)
- Multiply the number of marks by 0.0748 to find the gallons used in 20 minutes.
Using your water meter to track consumption

Want to know how much water you’re using in a day, a week or month? Read your meter! Your water meter can help you monitor your water use and help you make decisions about your water budget. Pick a time frame that makes sense for you and your family: once a day, once a week, or once a month. Read the meter at approximately the same time each day. These instructions can also help you calculate the water use for a particular task, like watering the lawn, washing dishes or clothes, and taking a shower.

The water meter face has several useful tools:
1. The blue triangle is a low flow indicator and a leak detector. If it moves when all the water in the home is turned off you have a leak. See the story entitled Is your home water tight? Use your water meter to check for directions to find the leak.
2. The red sweep hand measures cubic feet of water consumed. One full sweep around the dial is equal to 1 cubic foot of water or 7.48 gallons. Each mark around the dial is worth 0.0748 gallons.
3. The straight-reading meter on the meter face looks like a car odometer. The numbers indicate the water used in cubic feet. Water is billed in hundred cubic feet units (numbers in white boxes) each equals 748 gallons.

Track your water use:

1. **Find your meter box.** The residential meters in Lakewood are located next to the curb and generally set with the meter for the house next door. So your meter may be in your neighbor’s front yard. Yours is the meter closest to your home.
2. **Open the meter box lid.** Place a screwdriver in the opening pull up and slide the top open. You don’t have to lift! Don’t be surprised to find bugs in the box. They like the dark moist environment.
3. **Open the lid on the meter.**
4. **Find the beginning read.** Write down the numbers, and note the date and time.
5. **Wait and use water.** After your chosen time frame has elapsed go back to the meter and read it again. Write down the new numbers.
6. **Finding water use in cubic feet.** Subtract the beginning read from the ending read. This gives you the number of units in cubic that that you have consumed.
7. **Convert your water use to gallons.** Multiply your consumption by 7.48

![Image of water meter](Copy These Numbers)

Beginning Read:  

Ending Read:  

Date: ________________    Time: __________    Date: ________________    Time: __________

Calculate your water use:

Ending Read:  

Beginning Read:  

Cubic Feet Used  

X 7.48  Gallons  

TOTAL GALLONS USED