

Potential Causes of High Water Bills

An unusually high water bill is most often caused by a leak or change in water uses. Some common causes of high-water bills include:

- A leaking toilet, or a toilet that continues to run after being flushed.
- A dripping faucet; a faucet drip can waste 20 gallons of water a day or more
- Filling or topping off a swimming pool
- Watering the lawn, new grass, or trees; also check for an open hose
- Kids home for summer vacations or school holidays; guests
- Water-cooled air conditioners
- Humidifier on the furnace, boiler heating system
- Automatic Ice maker in the freezer
- Washer or dishwasher leaking
- Water heater leaking
- Water softener problems – cycles continuously
- A broken water pipe or obvious leak; check pipes in the basement or crawlspace
- Running the water to avoid freezing water pipes during cold weather

Generally, water consumption is higher during the summer months due to watering of lawns, pools, and gardening. Typically, an average family of four uses 4000-5000 gallons of water a month. Here are a few things to check if you get a bill that is higher than usual.

Changes in your water use

Did you have house guests, water your lawn more than usual, or do anything else out of the ordinary in the last month that uses a lot of water? If so, this may account for an increase in your water bill.

Check for leaks

Leaks, whether unseen or unfixed, can waste hundreds and even thousands of gallons of water. It is important to routinely check your plumbing and home for leaky faucets, toilets, and outside taps and irrigation lines.

Toilets and faucet leaks

The most common cause for a high water bill is running water from your toilet. A continuously running toilet can waste up to 200 gallons a day. That can double your family's typical water use, so fix toilet leaks as soon as possible. Some leaks are easy to find, such as a dripping faucet or running toilet. You can usually hear a running toilet, but not always.

Outdoor and underground leaks

Check outdoor spigots and crawl spaces, and look for wet spots in your yard, which may indicate a leak.

Do-It-Yourself Toilet Assessment

First check for the most common leak: a deteriorated or defected flush valve (flapper) ball at the bottom of the toilet tank. If it does not make a tight seal water will leak into the toilet bowl. To check for this:

- Take the lid off of the tank behind the bowl, flush the toilet, then wait for it to fully refill.
- Put several drops of food coloring or a colored dye tablet in the tank.
- Wait at least 20 minutes; longer if you suspect it is a small leak.
- If there is any color in the toilet bowl, there is a leak.

The second most common type of leak has to do with an improperly adjusted or broken fill valve. To check for this, take the lid off of the toilet tank, flush, and see if water is draining into the overflow tubes when the tank is full.

Also, make sure that the chain that connects your flapper valve to the flush handle is not getting caught under the flapper valve keeping it from closing properly.

Water Softeners

Customers with water softeners have higher water bills due to the regeneration or backwash cycles their systems go through. The systems are preset to regenerate or backwash on a regular basis. The systems will use water to clean the filter media and discharge the wastewater into the ground next to the system. There are times when these systems will get stuck in a cycle which will cause higher water usage.

How to Determine if You Still Have a Leak

Method 1:

Turn off all water taps inside and outside your home. Many meters have a small triangle on the meter face, designed to detect even small leaks. If this triangle is moving when you have all the water off inside & outside your home, you may have a leak.

Method 2:

Turn off all water taps inside and outside your home. Record the meter reading from your meter and return in 20-30 minutes to check for movement. If the meter reading has changed, you may have a leak. You may want to do this over a longer period of time such as before you leave the house for the day then read it again when you come home.

What can I do if My Bill is Unusually High?

If you receive a bill that you feel is too high, check over the common causes listed above. This may help to pinpoint the source of the high bill. If you feel that your bill is too high and you have not been contacted by the Village about it, call (330) 878-7710. Please get a reading from your meter to give to the office so that we can compare it to the last recorded reading. If the meter reading is checked and found to be accurate, you may need to contact a plumber to help determine the source of the leak. Property owners are responsible for all private service water lines from the public water main to the residence and for leaks inside the home.