

## **POTENTIAL CAUSES OF HIGH WATER USAGE**

An unusually high water bill is most often due to a leak or change in water usage. Some of the common causes of high water usage include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A leaking toilet or a toilet that continuously runs after being flushed (see additional information below).
- A dripping faucet; a faucet drip can waste 20 gallons of water per day or more
- Filling or topping off a swimming pool
- Watering the lawn, new grass, trees or plantings.
- Open hose bib
- Kids home for summer vacations or school holidays or guests
- Water-cooled air conditioners
- A broken water pipe or obvious leak inside or outside of the home
- Water heater leak
- Water softener problems-cycles continuously

Generally, water consumption is higher during the summer due to watering lawns, pools, and gardening. Typically, an average family of four utilizes 8,228 to 9,724 gallons of water per month. Here are a few things to check if your usage is higher than usual:

### **Changes in your water usage**

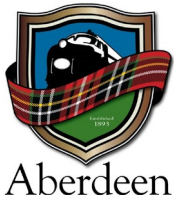
Did you have guests, water your lawn more than usual, or do anything else out of the ordinary in the months of higher usage? If so, this may account for an increase in your water bill.

### **Check for leaks**

Leaks, whether unseen or unfixed, can waste hundreds 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.

### **Toilet and faucet leaks**

The most common cause of a high water bill is running water from your toilet. A continuously running toilet can waste up to 200 gallons per day. This can double a family's typical water usage. Some leaks are easy to find, but not always. See the toilet assessment below for help in determining if this is the cause of your high water bill.



### **Outdoor and underground leaks**

Leaks can also occur in harder to find places, such as your house or in the service line between your water meter and your home. 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 defective 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 a few drops of dye or colored dye tablet (available at most hardware stores) 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.

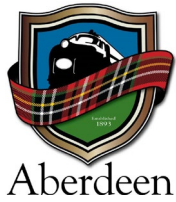
The second most common type of leak has to do with an improperly adjusted or broken fill (ballcock) valve. To check this, take the lid off of the toilet tank, flush, and see if water is draining into the overflow tubes when the tank is full.

### **Irrigation Systems**

During the dry months, irrigation systems are the common source of high water usage. Watering times generally double during the dry months compared to the rest of the year. Automated irrigation systems should be checked regularly to confirm they are working properly and have no leaks or broken sprinkler heads. If a sprinkler valve sticks on, it could waste an extremely large quantity of water. The irrigation timer may not be programmed properly; i.e. sprinklers are watering too often and/or too long. Reprogramming may be necessary if the power has been off.

### **Water Softeners**

Customers with water softeners have higher water bills due to the regeneration or backwash cycles of their system. 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 get stuck in a cycle, which will cause higher water usage.



### **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 excess usage. Most often, the Town's utility billing program will detect unusually high bills and the Town will automatically send a public works employee to check the meter for a leak. If you feel that your bill is too high and the Town has not contacted you, please contact our office at (910) 944-7799. Town staff will gladly schedule for a meter reading to be re-checked. If the meter reading is checked and found to be accurate, you may need to contact a plumber or other professional to help determine the source of the leak or high usage. Property owners and/or renters are responsible for all private water lines from the meter to the residence and for leaks inside of the home.