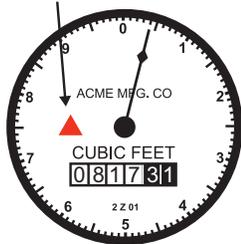


Looking for Leaks

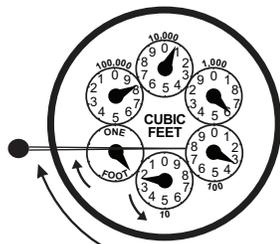
Straight-Read w/leak detector



Straight-Read



Round Dial



Straight Pin

If your water bill is higher than usual, you might have a leak. Start by reading your meter.

Step 1: Turn off all water-using fixtures and appliances, both indoors and outdoors.

Step 2: Determine your meter type. Your water meter is in a concrete box near the curb. Look for the EBMUD logo on the lid. Carefully lift the lid, slide it off to one side, and flip up the meter cover to look at the dial. The hands on the dial move any time water passes through the meter. You'll find either a straight-read or round-read dial.

Step 3: Test for movement. On straight-read dials, the large needle on the dial is used for testing. On round-read dials, the test dial will either be labeled "one foot" or will have no markings.

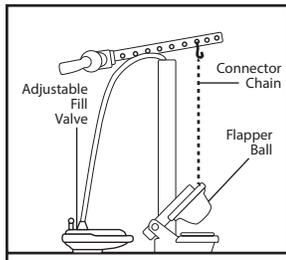
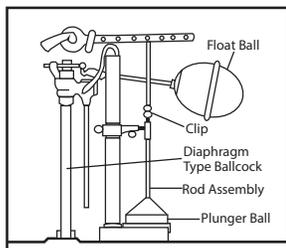
To start, take a picture of the meter or mark the needle location by laying a straight-pin or toothpick exactly on top of it.

Wait 30 min then check the dial again. If the needle has moved, and no one has used any water, you probably have a leak.

Step 4: If the needle moved, determine if the leak is indoors or outdoors by locating the main shut-off valve (usually at the front of the house underneath an outside faucet). If the dial moves while the main house valve is turned off, you probably have an underground house line leak. If movement stops, then the leak is indoors.

Note: Leaks that may occur intermittently (like a running toilet, irrigation system leak or faulty swimming pool fill valve) will not always continuously register at the meter.

Read Your Meter often to better understand and track consumption. Keep a daily log if you think you have a leak. If your sprinkler system has a timer, read the meter before and after an irrigation cycle to determine how much water is going into the landscape.



Toilet tanks have different ballcock and plunger ball arrangements. Shut off the water, empty the tank, and take damaged parts to the hardware store for a perfect match.

Check the toilet first

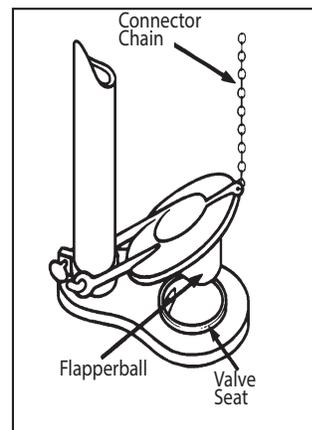
Toilet leaks are the most common household leaks and the number one cause of high water bills. Listen closely for a trickling sound or a periodic flush caused by the toilet topping itself off every few minutes. These are all tell-tale signs of a leak.

The first step is to drop a dye tablet or several drops of ordinary food coloring into the toilet tank. Wait 15 minutes. If color shows up in the toilet bowl, you have a leak.

The second step is to turn off the toilet's water supply (usually it has a diamond shaped handle, near the wall at the base of the toilet) and mark the water level inside the tank. Wait 15 minutes and then check the water level. If it has dropped below your mark, the problem is at the bottom of the toilet tank at the flapper or plunger ball.

However – if the water level has stayed the same, then the problem is an overflow near the top of the tank, involving the float ball or the fill valve – or both.

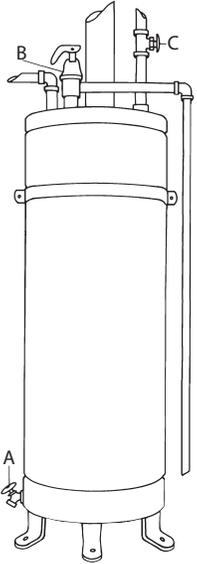
All of these items are easy and inexpensive to replace. Look for products labeled chloramine resistant at your local hardware store.



It is common for flapperballs to wear out and need replacement.



Looking for Leaks



Check for water heater leaks

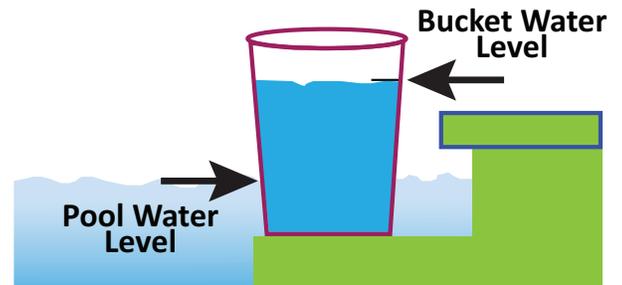
If you notice a puddle of water around the bottom of the tank, it probably indicates a leak caused by corrosion – a sign of old age, and the most common reason for replacing the tank. If the tank wall is corroding, it's time to retire the tank and get a new energy saving model.

Water heaters last about 15 years with proper care. To clear out any sediment, flush a few quarts of water from the drain valve at the bottom of the tank into a bucket about every six months and operate the pressure-relief valve at the top of the tank. Don't worry if a little water leaks out; that means it's working. Also close and reopen the cold-water inlet valve at the top to make sure it's easy to operate in an emergency.

- A: Drain Valve
- B: Pressure relief valve
- C: Cold-Water inlet valve

Test for a swimming pool leak

If the pool has an automatic fill valve, make sure it is fully turned off, then place a bucket on a pool step. Fill the bucket with pool water to about three to four inches from the top, matching the water level in the bucket with the level of the pool. Carefully mark the water levels on both the inside and outside of the bucket. Wait 24 hours. If the pool water has dropped below the bucket's contents, you may have a leak. Contact a pool professional for help.



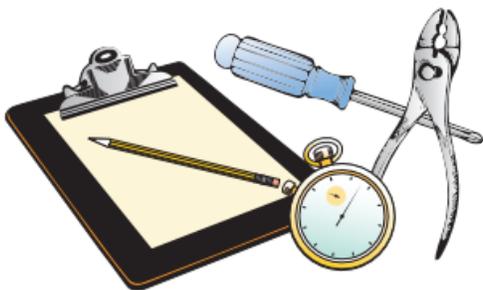
Check your yard

Look for wet ground or spots that are greener than the rest of the landscape. These spots could be getting extra water due to a leak or from broken sprinklers. Run the sprinklers or the drip lines one station at a time. Check the system for the following problem signs:

- Uneven pressure (could mean a leak in an underground pipe)
- Blocked spray heads
- Leaning spray heads
- Clogged spray heads
- Uneven coverage
- Disconnected drip tubing
- Missing or clogged drip emitters
- Spray hitting sidewalks or driveways instead of plants



Review your watering schedule. The irrigation may be coming on more frequently than you expect. Use the "program" function on your automatic timer to make sure plants are not being over or under-watered. Different types of plants require different programs and watering schedules. For example, your lawn should be on one program and your groundcovers and shrubs on another.



Need more help?

Order EBMUD's Free Home Survey Kit or download a digital copy of the worksheet for illustrated step-by-step instructions that take you through your home and landscape.



Water Conservation

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