



## HOW TO USE YOUR WATER METER TO DETECT A LEAK IN YOUR HOME

If you have an unusually high water bill, you can use your meter to check for a continuous leak.

Some leaks, like a running toilet, may start and stop. This method may not identify those types of leaks if it is not running at the time you check your meter.

### Before You Start

- Make sure all water-using appliances and fixtures in your home, including irrigation systems, are switched off and no one is using any water.
- Locate your water meter. Water meters are usually located in the parking strip or the sidewalk at the front or side of the house. If you are unable to find your water meter, call your water utility for assistance.
- Read the dial on your water meter



## Detecting a Leak

1. Remove the meter box lid. You can use a sturdy screwdriver to remove the lid by inserting it into the small hole and lifting the lid up.
2. If the dial on your meter has a cover on it, open the cover to view the dial. If the dial is muddy, give it a quick clean with a damp cloth.
3. Make sure the number on your meter matches the meter number on your water bill.
4. Most meters have a low-flow indicator, a small dial that will spin even if only a small amount of water is passing through the meter.
5. If the dial is ***not moving***, you **do not** have a continuous leak. If the dial is ***moving***, you have a leak.

## Locating the Leak

You can also use your meter to find out if your leak is located inside your home, outside, or in your irrigation system.

1. Find and close the main water shut-off valve for your house. The shut-off valve can usually be located outside of your house. Not all homes have them.
2. To make sure that the water is shut off, turn on an indoor faucet and see if the water stops running.
3. Check your water meter.
  - If the meter dial stopped moving after you closed the shut-off valve, ***your leak is inside the house*** – more than likely in your toilet. Toilet flappers are a common cause of leaks inside the home.
  - ***If you have an irrigation system and the dial is still moving when the shut-off valve to the house is closed***, shut off the water to the irrigation system. If this stops the dial from moving, the leak is in your **irrigation system**. Often, a professional plumber or landscaper is required to fix these leaks.
  - ***If you DON'T have an irrigation system and the dial is still moving when the shut-off valve to the house is closed***, you have a **leak in the service line** between the meter and your shut-off valve. We suggest calling a professional plumber to repair service line leaks.
4. Before finishing, make sure you securely replace the water meter box lid.

## Additional Questions?

Please call Sunnyvale Utilities at (408)730-7400 and we will dispatch a Sunnyvale Water technician to assist.