

Checking For Possible Leaks around Your Home

Phoenix's extreme temperatures can be tough on your plumbing lines, so it's a good idea to regularly check your home, indoors and out, for water leaks. This not only saves you costly repairs if a pipe were to break, it saves water and saves you money, too.


The first place to start is your Municipal Services bill (see example below) that is mailed to you every month. On the bill we provide (A) your current and last month's water meter reading in 100 cubic feet units (CCF), (B) the current and last month's units billed (which is found by calculating the difference in the CCF numbers), (C) the current and last month's gallons used (748 gallons = 1 Unit); and (D) the gallons used daily for the current billing and for last year's billing. If the water consumption increases significantly from one month or one year to the other and you haven't changed your water use habits, then there's a good chance you have a leak somewhere on your property.

WATER SERVICES DEPARTMENT

FOR PROJECT *ASSIST* INCREASE YOUR PAYMENT BY EXACTLY \$1.00 AND CHECK HERE

ACCOUNT NUMBER 0-1234-5678-09	DUE DATE 08/13/07	ENTER AMOUNT PAID PAY THIS	125.64
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PLEASE WRITE ACCOUNT NUMBER ON CHECK MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO CITY OF PHOENIX



JOHN W. DOE
1234 E. SOMEPLACE STREET
PHOENIX, AZ 85003-1234

City of Phoenix

DETACH AND RETURN THIS PART WITH PAYMENT
IF PAYING IN PERSON, BRING ENTIRE BILL.

ACCOUNT NUMBER 0-1234-5678-09	SERVICE ADDRESS 1234 E. SOMEPLACE STREET	HEAD DATE 07/23/07
METER READING	UNITS BILLED	GALLONS USED
CURRENT A 3513	36	26,928
LAST MONTH 3477	B 24	C 19,448
		GAL. USED DAILY
		D 876

CHARGES

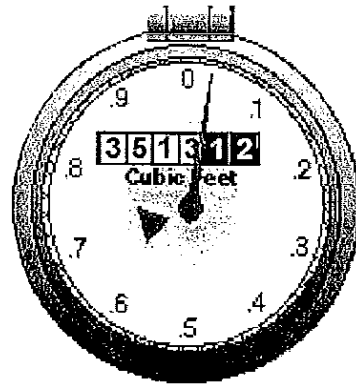
***** SEWER FEES ARE RECALCULATED EACH JULY FOR COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS BASED UPON THE WATER USE SHOWN ON YOUR MOST RECENT JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH MUNICIPAL SERVICES BILL. *****	PREVIOUS AMOUNT \$.12CR	WATER BASE FEE 6.96
		WATER USAGE FEE 97.50
		ENVIRONMENT/MANDATES 13.68
		STATE & OTHER TAXES 7.62
***** SWIMMING POOL OWNERS *****		
DURING SUMMER MONTHS, MORE THAN THREE FEET OF WATER IS LOST TO EVAPORATION. A POOL COVER OR OTHER ADEQUATE PROTECTION FROM THE SUN WILL HELP SAVE YOU MONEY BY CONSERVING WATER.	CURRENT CHARGES 125.76	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE \$ 125.64

FOR QUESTIONS OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CALL WATER CUSTOMER SERVICES AT (602) 262-6251.
FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF OUR HEARING IMPAIRED CUSTOMERS, OUR TDD NUMBER IS 602.1.534.3113.
LONG DISTANCE - TOLL FREE 1-888-669-5063.

If you've seen an increase in water use, but don't see any visible signs of a leak anywhere, here are a few steps to follow to help determine if there is a leak on your property. If after following these guidelines you

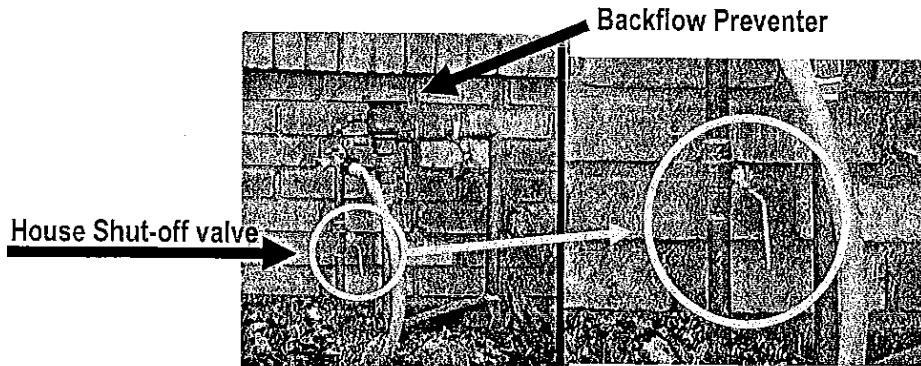
still think you have a leak in your house, it's best to hire a licensed, professional plumber to come and inspect the property for you.

If you think you have a water leak, the first thing to do is read your water meter. Write down the numbers on the meter and keep it in a safe place. This will help you keep track of how much water is actually being used on your property. Below is an illustration of a water meter, which is reading 3513 CCF (the "current" read on the bill example above).

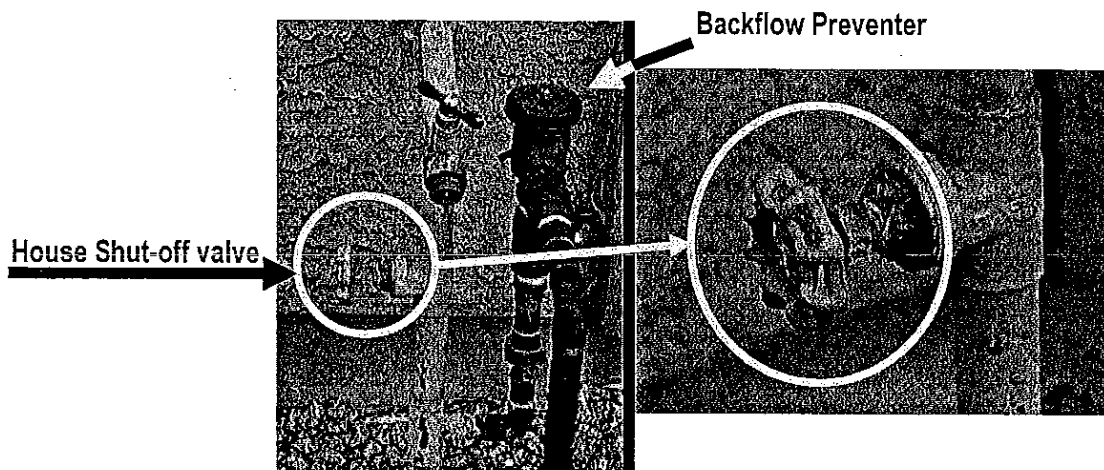


Make sure that all water is shut off both inside and outside your house, and look at the needles on the meter. The small needle, usually a triangle, measures the smallest amount of water that is passing through the meter. If this needle is moving and if all the water taps are turned off on your property, then you have a leak somewhere.

To determine if the leak is inside or outside your house, find the main house shut-off valve, which is usually located at the front of the house near a hose bib (see examples 1 and 2 below). Turn the water off to the house and then check the meter again. If the small needle stops moving, then the leak is likely inside your house. If the needle keeps moving, then the leak is between the meter and the house shut off valve. Sometimes an irrigation system is connected between the meter and the house valve through a backflow preventer, which also has shut off valves. If the house valve is closed and the backflow valves are in the open position and the irrigation system is turned off, and the blue dial on the meter is still turning, then you may have a leak in your irrigation system. *Also note that sometimes the house shut-off valve doesn't close all the way because of age or lack of use.*



Example 1



Example 2

To be certain of where a leak is located exactly, we recommend you hire a licensed, professional plumber to inspect your property, inside and out.

Here are some other tips to help find leaks around your home:

Outdoors

- Check the ground near every hose bib. If the ground is damp or wet, it's pretty likely there is a small leak. The same goes for your irrigation control box. If the ground inside the box is wet, there may be a leak when the irrigation system is running.
- Check your irrigation system when it's on. Look for popped sprinkler heads and other problems. Even though this isn't technically a leak, the amount of water running through a faulty sprinkler head can add up quickly, and they are pretty easy to fix.
- If you have a pool, shut the auto leveler off for a few days, and mark the water level. If the level drops significantly in a day or two, there's a good chance there's a leak in your pool's plumbing system.

Indoors

- Check every fitting and joint in all of the exposed plumbing in the house and make sure they are dry. This is usually underneath sinks in the kitchen and bathroom. If any water is found, then there's a good chance you just need to replace a gasket.
- Look for damp spots on the ceiling, walls, or floors all around your house. This is usually a sign there is probably a water leak that you cannot see. Hiring a professional, licensed plumber to determine this is the best course of action.
- Inspect faucets and shower heads for drips. Even the slightest drip can add up quickly on your water bill, and it's usually just an old gasket that needs to be replaced.

- In the bathroom, the toilet is the most common place for a leak. To see if your toilet is working properly, put a few drops of food coloring into the tank and wait a few minutes. If the water makes its way into the toilet bowl, then your toilet is leaking. It's usually the flapper valve which is fairly easy to replace.
- If you own a water softening system, make sure to check it frequently to ensure it's not stuck in a backwash mode. This can send a lot of water and money straight down the drain and you'd never even see it.