

How to Read Your Water Meter

 waterga.com/how-to-read-a-water-meter

Water Meter Education

A water meter is measures the quantity (volume) of water that passes through a pipe or other outlet. Typically, meters use a standard unit of measure for volume, such as cubic feet or gallons. Your meter works like a car odometer, recording the cumulative amount of water that has passed through the meter. WUM records every reading, and subtracts the old reading from the new reading to determine the amount of water used since the previous read. By understanding how to read your meter and calculate your usage, you will be able to verify that we are reading your meter fairly and accurately, and to spot problems, such as leaks.

Why Read Your Meter?

WUM reads meters to calculate bills, and to prevent water loss. You should read your meter too. Reading your water meter regularly will help you understand your bills, and to understand how you are consuming water. You can determine how much water you typically consume over a period of time by keeping a simple log. You can also determine the amount of water used over the course of an event, such as an irrigation cycle. Finally, you can detect water flowing that you are not intending to use, such as a leak or water theft. Checking readings periodically will help you to catch any problems, before WUM reads the meter to calculate a bill. Regular reading of your household meters (water, electric, or gas), will make you a more educated consumer, and will put you in a position to ensure your meter is properly read by the utility company.

Helpful Tip:

Read your meter periodically and record the results! This helps with water conservation practices and in identifying water leaks ahead of time.

Bill Higher Than Normal?

Download our [Leak Check](#) document for more information on checking for household leaks. For account inquiries or additional assistance with an unexpected high water bill, please [contact our office](#).



Updated Meters

For customers with updated meters installed at their residence, simply open the lid of your meter to expose the sensor to sunlight for an automatic scrolling of meter information. Our new meter hardware is comprised of a static water meter based on ultrasonic technology. This update in technology provides WUM customers with an extremely accurate usage calculation of water consumption and further eliminates measuring deviations caused by sand, suspended particles, or air pockets. Concerned about an unusual bill spike? Please visit our [High Water Bill](#) page for tips, education, and how to handle an unusual bill.

How to Read Your Water Meter

Step 1: Locate your meter box.

To read your water meter, you'll need to locate it first. Most meters are located in your front lawn or near the curb or sidewalk, though some can be in a side yard, or even your back yard. The meter "box" will include a metal or plastic lid that reads "Water" or "Water Meter." To remove the lid, use a long metal screwdriver, and pry gently from the side of the box. Wearing gloves is an additional option for added protection from hot lids or from boxes that have become natural homes for wildlife, including insects, frogs, and even snakes.

Step 2: Identify your type of water meter.

Though we are currently in the process of replacing outdated meter hardware, some customers may still have previous models of **Digital** or **Analog** meters at their residence. Please see below for examples of both types:

Digital Meter



Anatomy of a Digital Meter:

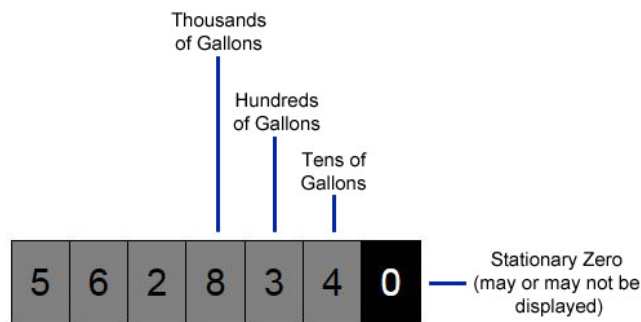
Display – The digital meter needs light for activation so you may need to shine a flashlight on it. The display alternates between the meter read and the flow rate. The meter read equals the gallons (or cubic feet) used while the flow rate equals the number of gallons (or cubic feet) per minute flowing through the water meter.

Analog Meter

Identifying your Unit of Measurement

Unit of Measure – WUM provides meters that measure in cubic feet and meters that measure in gallons. 100 cubic feet of water is equal to 748 gallons of water.

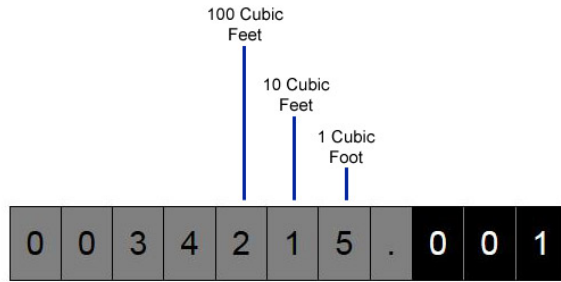
Does your meter measure in Gallons?



Example: 5,628,340 gallons have been used in total since the installation date.

Does your meter measure in Cubic Feet?

Example: 34,215 cubic feet of water was used since the date of installation. To convert cubic feet to gallons, multiply the number of cubic feet by 7.48. ($34,215 \text{ ft}^3 * 7.48 = 255,928.2$ gallons) Now we know that 255,928.2 gallons have been used since the date of installation.



Performing a Leak Test

- Turn off all indoor and outdoor water appliances. Don't forget icemakers and irrigation spigots. Do not turn on any water during this test.
- There will be two different numbers that display on your meter. They are the meter read and flow rate. The meter read is the total amount of water used since the installation date. It will always be the larger number. The other number that will flash on the screen is the flow rate. This is how much water is flowing currently.
- After turning off your water, record the meter read on your odometer. This will be your 1st Reading. (When all water is off, if the flow rate is not 0, then you have a small leak.)
- Wait 20 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time needed to give you a clear read.
- After the 20 minutes have passed, go back to your water meter and take another reading of the numbers on your "odometer." This is your 2nd Reading.
- Do the math.

If X equals 0, and your low flow indicator is not moving, then you do not have a leak. If x is any number greater than 0, but all water utilities are turned off, then you have a **leak**.

2nd Reading
 -1st Reading

Special Note about Water Leaks

Some leaks may only appear at higher pressures and "disappear" during lower pressures. If you suspect a leak, keep monitoring over a long period of time. Record your water use intermittently and keep a log of your usage. A classic example of a leak that may not appear immediately is a sprinkler head that does not always set. Please visit our [High Water Bill](#) page for more information on types of water leaks or what to do after receiving a high water bill. Visit our [Leak Adjustment](#) page for more information and current eligibility requirements.

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