



# Centerton Utilities

(Water/Wastewater Departments) (Franchised Utility Permitting)

## HOW TO FIND AND FIX WATER LEAKS

Did you know the average home can leak 50 to 100 gallons of water a day? Slow drips of water can add up quickly. Even small leaks can add up to thousands of gallons of water wasted monthly. If the drip is on the hot water side, you are also paying for wasted energy. By not repairing leaks you not only waste water and energy but you may also be subjecting your home and personal belongings to severe water damage. Identifying and repairing water leaks is a great way to reduce the amount of water that you are billed.

### Using your water meter to check for leaks:

1. Locate the water meter. It is generally near the street at the corner of the lot under a metal or plastic lid. Brush away any soil or dirt before you remove the lid and be very careful of electronic equipment and wires. The water meter register usually has a black protective dust cover that you will need to flip back to read the meter. You will need a flashlight (brighter than that from a cell phone) to shine on the LCD panel. (See picture for details) When water is not being used, none of the numbers on the meter should move.
2. Turn off every water-using item inside and outside the building, one at a time if necessary to identify a leaky fixture. Perhaps have another person with a cell phone watch the meter while you turn off the fixtures so they can report to you when the leak detector stops.
3. Watch the water meter for a minute or more. If the leak detector dial or the numbers are moving, even at a slow rate, you probably have a leak. You may also want to check the meter reading (numbers and sweep hand) at a set time, and then come back an hour later to check the reading – ensuring that no water has been turned on during the hour. If the meter reading has increased, there is a leak.

***\*\*Note: Please be aware that since the meter is our property and responsibility, we do not allow anyone other than trained***

***Centerton Utilities personnel to turn the meter valve on/off. Please call (479)795-0222 to get assistance.***

#### LIGHT SENSOR

- ◊ Recessed small hole (next to the word NEPTUNE).
- ◊ Supplies the power for the LCD panel (light activated)

On your LCD screen you may see the following icons:



**LEAK INDICATOR**  
◊ Displays a possible leak

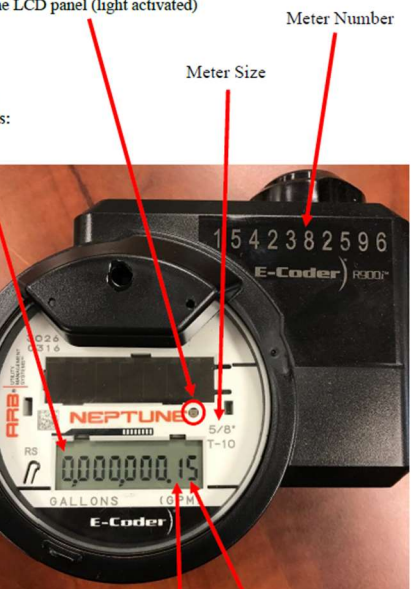
**OFF** No leak indicated

**Flashing**  
Intermittent leak indicates that water has been used for at least 15 minute intervals during a 24 hour period

**On Continuously**  
Indicates water use for all 96 15 minute intervals during a 24 hour period



**FLOW INDICATOR**  
◊ Shows the direction of flow through the meter.



**LCD Display**  
◊ Nine digit LCD displays the meter reading in billing units of gallons

The reading is followed by two decimal points  
◊ The first decimal point is a tenth of a gallon  
◊ The second decimal point is a hundredth of a gallon

### To determine whether the leak is inside or outside of your building/home:

First find the building's main shut-off valve (if you have one). If you do not have a shut-off valve, we recommend you have one installed. It can be indoors or outdoors but should be just outside the meter can or near the location where the water line enters the building or close to your water heater. If you don't know where the shut-off valve is, find where your water enters the building, and start in the crawl space or near and above, the hot water heater. Per code, all newer homes will have a shut-off valve. Close the building's shut-off valve and then turn on a water fixture to confirm that the water is off and check the water meter. If the shut-off valve is closed and the meter has stopped, the leak is inside your building. If you need help with repairs, or in locating the interior leak, call a licensed plumber. If the meter continues to run with the building shut-off closed, your leak is in the service line (between the meter and the building). If a leak between the meter and the building is suspected, carefully walk the path again from the meter to where the line enters your building to locate the leak. Look for obvious signs of an outdoor water leak, such as ground sinking, dampness, lush grass in an isolated area or pooling of water. If you are not capable, we recommend calling a licensed plumber to fix underground leaks.

**If you find that your leak is in the service line, like, main water line into your building please first contact Arkansas One Call by calling “811” at least two working days before you dig! It is an Arkansas State law, and you could be subject to a \$50,000.00 fine if you hit someone’s buried lines. If it is an emergency, tell them that and they will code it as such and try to get everyone out to mark the lines ASAP.**

### **How to check for a leaky toilet:**

Toilet leaks can range from a small to large, constant to random and many are silent. Even the smallest, silent leak can waste hundreds of dollars per year in water and sewer costs. Large leaks waste much more. The good news is it’s easier than you think to fix a toilet leak.

1. If your toilet is functioning properly, no water should move from the tank to the bowl until it is manually flushed. Remove the tank lid. Add just a few drops of food coloring, Kool-Aid, something with deep color to the tank water. Replace the tank lid and do not flush.
2. After about 45 minutes to an hour, look into the toilet bowl. If you see colored water, you have a leak. If the water is clear, water is not leaking from the tank to the bowl. Remember if you have a large enough leak, the toilet can flush on its own, so make sure it hasn’t (or wasn’t manually) flushed while you were waiting. The most common reason a toilet loses water from the tank to the bowl is a malfunctioning flapper. The flapper is a rubber control valve that opens when you flush your toilet. Another cause could be the fill valve causing some leakage if the valve isn’t completely closing after refilling the tank. If you remove the tank lid, and can easily identify the cause of the leak, correct the problem, and then try your leak test again. Bending the float or adjusting the rubber flapper should be considered “temporary fixes”; they will not solve the problem. Also, a small leak will only get worse over time.

### **A word about in tank toilet bowl cleaners:**

A damaged toilet flapper is the number one cause of all toilet leaks. The problem often occurs when in-tank chlorine toilet cleaners are used. While these products are keeping your toilet bowl clean, the chemicals can damage a rubber flapper in as little as 30 days, ultimately causing a leak.

### **Checking the irrigation system / lawn sprinkler system for leaks:**

If you do not find the leak inside your building or service line, you need to check the irrigation or sprinkler system. To check for irrigation leaks, you need to isolate the irrigation system from the main water. (Most of the time you will have a separate meter for your irrigation system so it will be easy to determine whether it is in your home or irrigation).

1. Turn the irrigation valve off. If the irrigation valve is turned off and the meter has stopped, the leak is in the irrigation system. Spotting leaks in irrigation or sprinkler systems is similar to troubleshooting internal plumbing – you have to look for signs of a leak, keep in mind, that not all leaks will come to the surface or show any signs.
2. When you have an irrigation system installed, it is a good idea to retain a copy of the system’s layout. This will provide you with a map so you can “walk the system” to identify leaks. Any wet spots or pooling of water should be investigated.
3. In general, irrigation systems should be checked at least weekly, while the system is on (water is being delivered to landscaping), to ensure they are operating properly, and your plants are getting the water they need. Also, inspect drop emitters and sprinkler-heads to ensure they are intact. Broken Heads or emitters can release a lot of water sometimes unnoticed, driving up your water bill.

**Do you have additional questions about your usage?**

**Please contact Centerton Utilities at (479)795-0222 or email us at [admin@centertonutilities.com](mailto:admin@centertonutilities.com)**

***This information is provided as a public service of the Centerton Water and Sewer Department. Any action by a water customer as a result of this information is the sole responsibility of the customer. Centerton Utilities recommends using a Licensed Master Plumber/Leak Detector. A Licensed Master Plumber will know the appropriate steps to take to eliminate the problem.***