



Gloucester County Utilities Department
Location: 7384 Carriage Court
6489 Main Street
Gloucester, VA 23061
(804) 693-4044
www.gloucesterva.info

CHECKLIST FOR DETECTING WATER LEAKS

Some leaks require a simple fix—a worn toilet flapper, a loose pipe connection, or showerhead with stray spray. But you may want to consult a licensed plumber to stop your running toilet, broken sprinklers, water heater drips, or malfunctioning water supply lines. Take a quick inventory of clues to water waste:

IN THE BATHROOM

- *Toilets:* Listen for running water and conduct a food coloring test. Put a few drops of food coloring into the tank at the back of your toilet and let it sit for 10 minutes. If color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak. Make sure to flush your toilet afterwards to avoid staining.
- *Faucets:* Listen and watch for drips.
- *Showerheads:* Turn on and look for drips or stray sprays that can be stopped with tape.
- *In the tub:* Turn on the tub, then divert the water to the shower and see if there's still a lot of water coming from the tub; that could mean the spout diverter needs replacing.
- *Under the sink:* Check for pooling water under pipes and rust around the joints and edges.

IN THE KITCHEN

- *Faucet:* Listen for drips and tighten aerators or replace fixtures as necessary.
- *Sprayer:* Check to make sure water is spraying smoothly and clean openings as needed.
- *Under the sink:* Check for pooling water under pipes and rust around joints and edges.
- *Appliances:* Check for pooling water underneath dishwashers and refrigerators with ice makers, which could indicate a supply line leak.

IN THE LAUNDRY OR UTILITY ROOM

- *Under the sink:* Check for pooling water under pipe connections.
- *Clothes washer:* Check for pooling water, which could indicate a supply line leak.

DON'T FORGET TO GO OUTSIDE

- *At the spigot:* Ensure tight connections with the hose and see if the hose washer needs replacing.
- *In ground irrigation system:* Check for broken sprinklers or nozzles spraying in the wrong direction.

IN THE BASEMENT OR UTILITY ROOM

- *Water heater:* Check beneath the tank for pooling water, rust, or other signs of leakage.

AVERAGE WATER USAGE

The average person uses approximately 80-100 gallons of water per day. That is 2,400 to 3,000 gallons per person per month. A family of 4 would use about 8-9,000 gallons per month.

BATH	36 Gallons
TOILET	1-3 Gallons
SHOWER	2-5 Gallons per minute
DISHWASHER	6-16 Gallons
CLOTHES WASHER	25-40 Gallons

(These numbers vary depending upon newer models with energy efficient appliances and fixtures)

HOW TO READ YOUR WATER METER

There are several reasons why it is helpful to locate and read your water meter.

- First, you might be interested in just how much water you use in a day. By reading your meter at the beginning and the end of the day, you can compare and tell how much water you and your family used.
- Second, you can check for leaks. If you turn off all the taps in your house, look at your meter and it is still turning, chances are you have leak somewhere.

LOCATE YOUR WATER METER:

Your water meter is generally located near the curb in front of your home. Meters are typically flush with the ground in a black meter box. Carefully remove the lid by using a tool such as a screwdriver or pliers. Visually examine the area to ensure your safety as Black Widow spiders are known to nest in meter boxes. Once you remove the lid, you will probably have to clean the glass cover on the meter. The meter may even be partially covered in dirt as we normally read the meters electronically. Be cautious not to damage the wires that are attached from the touch pad on the box lid to the meter.

There are two basic types of meters we use. We measure water consumption in thousands of gallons for billing purposes, however, you can read your meter down to the gallon.



A



B

HOW TO CHECK YOUR CONSUMPTION:

To calculate your water usage, record the numbers. The next day, take another reading and subtract them to find your usage for that time period.

HOW TO CHECK FOR A LEAK:

Make sure there is no water being used. Look at the meter, example A, the red dial will move when there is water going through the meter and the numbers on the meter will increase as well. For example B, lift the lid up, there is a small round circle with a +sign in when water is going through the meter.

If there is water movement through the meter when everything is off in the house, this is an indication that you may have a water leak. If the “leak wheel” is spinning, you may try to shut off the main valve in your home to determine whether or not it is in the house or the lateral line underground from the meter to your house.