

High Water Bill?

It could be a leak

Sometime a water bill can be high due to usage: Doing a lot of laundry, watering the grass, filling a pool. But most times it's a leak that you can find, fix, or call 77th Meridian to repair.

1. Possible Sources

- a. **Flapper at bottom of toilet tank:** This is typically a black or red pan shaped rubber part that keeps the water from flowing into the toilet bowl. When you flush, the handle temporarily lifts the flapper and lets the water flow into the bowl. The rubber in the flapper will degrade from the chlorine in the water over time and a leak will start. A badly leaking toilet can waste hundreds of gallons of water per month.
- b. **Stuck flapper or valve:** When the toilet is flushed the flapper is supposed to return and reseal the tank. Sometimes the other parts in the tank get out of alignment and prevent the flapper from properly resealing. Or, the valve attached to the float will not turn off all the way. In either case the toilet "runs" and never shuts off. Hundreds of gallons a day can be lost this way.
- c. **Kitchen faucet:** There are "washers" in the faucet assembly that will wear over time and not allow you to completely turn off the water. When this happens a drip will show at the tip of the faucet and will become more frequent. Even a slow drip will accumulate gallons of wasted water each day.
- d. **Bathroom faucet:** See Kitchen faucet above.
- e. **Shower faucet:** See Kitchen faucet above.
- f. **Outside hose bib:** A hose bib is on the outside wall of the house and allows you to attach a garden hose and then turn on/off the water. Just like the faucets inside the house, the hose bib can leak gallons of water a day if allowed to drip.
- g. **Underground leak:** City water is delivered by a large pipe in the street and connected to the house through a much smaller pipe buried under ground. The attachment is made at the water meter near the sidewalk. The pipe connecting to the house will sometimes, over many years, corrode and spring a leak.

2. Testing

- a. **Flapper at bottom of toilet tank:** Remove the cover from the toilet tank and place a few drops of food coloring in the tank. Wait about 15 minutes. If the water in the bowl changes color you have a leak. To check without food coloring, flush the toilet and wait 5 minutes. Place your fingers at the back of the bowl and if you feel water running past them then there is a leak.
- b. **Stuck flapper or valve:** Flush the toilet and wait for the bowl to fill. If working properly you should hear the valve shut off and the "rushing" sound will stop. If the rushing continues you have a leak. If unsure, remove the cover from the tank and look at the pipe coming up from the bottom of the tank. If water is washing into this overflow pipe then you have a leak.
- c. **Kitchen faucet:** Turn off the hot and cold water with the knobs. Look for an occasional drip or dripping. If the knobs are turned all the way off and the dripping persists then you have a leak.
- d. **Shower faucet:** See Kitchen faucet above.

- e. **Outside hose bib:** See Kitchen faucet above.
- f. **Underground leak:** If you have tried everything above and found no other leaks call 77th Meridian or file a maintenance request on the 77th Meridian web site on the “Tenants” page and request a test. You must be home or allow us to enter the house to perform the test. We must make sure all the water is off in the inside and then we watch the water meter. If it shows usage then there is an underground leak.

3. Repairs

- a. **Flapper at bottom of toilet tank:** Save the cost of a maintenance visit and simply replace the flapper. You can get a new flapper for a few dollars at a hardware store. It’s best to take the old flapper with you but be sure to first turn off the water at the wall beneath the tank. Read the directions on the package. If you don’t feel confident call 77th Meridian or file a maintenance request on the 77th Meridian web site on the “Tenants” page.
- b. **Stuck flapper or valve:** Save the cost of a maintenance visit and simply replace the flapper. You can get a new flapper for a few dollars at a hardware store. It’s best to take the old flapper with you but be sure to first turn off the water at the wall beneath the tank. Read the directions on the package. If you don’t feel confident or suspect the valve to be bad call 77th Meridian or file a maintenance request on the 77th Meridian web site on the “Tenants” page.
- c. **Kitchen faucet:** There are so many kinds of faucets it’s best not to try this repair. Call 77th Meridian or file a maintenance request on the 77th Meridian web site on the “Tenants” page.
- d. **Shower faucet:** See Kitchen faucet above.
- e. **Outside hose bib:** Don’t even try this one! Call 77th Meridian or file a maintenance request on the 77th Meridian web site on the “Tenants” page.
- f. **Underground leak:** Call 77th Meridian or file a maintenance request on the 77th Meridian web site on the “Tenants” page. If we determine that there is a leak then usually a plumber must dig up the front yard install a new pipe.