

## **Has your Water Bill unexpectedly increased?**

Every billing quarter the Town Office staff receives calls concerning increased water usage. Sometimes these increases are the result of a known water leak, while others do not know why they have an increase in water usage.

### **Do I have a leak?**

You may decide to contact a local plumber and have them perform a full inspection of your plumbing, however there are a few things you can do yourself.

- Check your inside and outside faucets for leaks. Make sure they are turned completely off with no drips evident. A dripping faucet can waste more than 3,000 gallons of water a year.
- Check for leaky pipes under the house or basement.
- Inspect your yard for wet areas that would normally be dry. An unusual wet area may indicate a broken water line buried in the ground.
- Check your toilets for leaks. Toilet leaks are the most common reason for increased water usage. A toilet leak can waste several gallons of water per day.

### **Is it my water meter's fault?**

It is important to note that residential water meters do not read more water than what passes through them. The common problems found with residential water meters are they do not read all the water passing through them or they stop reading all together.

### **How do I know if my toilets leak?**

If you must jiggle a handle to make it stop running, if you regularly hear sounds coming from a toilet that is not being used, or if it periodically turns the water on for 15 seconds or so without touching the handle, you can be certain you have a leak. Sometimes, even if your toilet doesn't have any of these symptoms, it's still possible that it is leaking. These "silent leaks" can go undetected, potentially wasting thousands of gallons of water.

### **How do I know if I have a "Silent leak"?**

There are a couple of ways to check for a silent leak. For both methods, carefully remove the cover on the toilet tank and set it aside. Remove any "in-tank" bowl cleaners and flush so that the water in both the bowl and the tank is clear.

**Method 1:** Add dye to the tank. You can use dye capsules/tablets, food coloring or powdered fruit drink mix also works well. Put enough in the tank water to give the water a deep color.

- a. Wait 30 minutes and don't use the toilet during that time.
- b. After 30 minutes, if the water in the bowl contains dye, that indicates the toilet is leaking. A properly operating toilet will store the water in the tank indefinitely without any water running into the bowl.

**Method 2:** Before you go to bed, shut the water off to the toilet that is being tested. In the morning, check the water level in the tank. If there is only an inch of water left at the bottom of the tank, then one or more of your tank parts is bad and is allowing the leak.

## **My toilet is leaking – now what?**

There are two possible culprits when a toilet leaks, the flush valve or the refill valve.

- a. Draw a pencil line on the inside of the tank at the waterline.
- b. Turn the water supply off, either under the tank or at the main shutoff and wait 20-30 minutes.
- c. If the water level remains at the pencil mark, the leak occurs at the refill valve, the unit on the left side of the tank.
- d. If the water level falls below the pencil mark, the leak involves the flush valve, the unit located in the center of the tank

Most homeowners can make their own toilet repairs. If you do not wish to make repairs to your leaking toilet on your own, contact a local plumber to assist you. If you do wish to repair your leaking toilet on your own, remember to turn off the water supply at the shut off in your house, and then make the repair. By making the necessary repairs, you can save many gallons of water and possibly reduce your water bill.

We encourage you to report to the Town Office all leaks found so we can document the leak information on your account. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact the Town Office at 410-479-2050.