

A DIY Guide to check for water leaks

Step 1. Turn all water-using appliances off so that no water is being used. This means turning off all water inside and outside the house including showers, sinks, washing machines, swimming pool auto fill valves, and any appliance that uses water.

Step 2. Take the lid off the meter box and lift the protective cover, do not detach or cut the wire.



Watch the meter. Your meter will have a black triangular, or a red round disc that is commonly called a “leak indicator.” (Below are images of the 3 types of meters currently in use depending on the size of your water service.)



- If it is spinning, you may have a leak. If the actual meter dial hand is moving, water is running somewhere in your system and you may have a leak – go to step 3.
- If the hand is not moving, note the position of the hand and wait 10 minutes. Check the meter again, if it has moved, you have a slow leak - go to step 3. If not, you do not have a leak.

Step 3. If you have a sprinkler irrigation system, manually shut off the two valves at the back flow assembly to isolate the irrigation system. Recheck to see if the meter leak detector is still moving.

- If it is not moving, your leak is in your irrigation system.
- If it is still moving, you may have a leak somewhere else in your system – go to step 4.

Step 4. Locate the main shut-off valve to the house. This is usually located close to the back side of the meter box. Turn off the valve.



Step 5. Turn on a faucet inside the house to test. If you have a multi-story resident go to the highest bathroom and turn on the cold water faucet.

- If water still flows from the faucet after several seconds, the shut off valve is not working.
- If no water flows through the faucet, the shut off valve is working. Return to the meter.

Step 6. Check if the meter's leak indicators hand is moving.

- If the leak indicator or dial hand is still moving, water is flowing between the meter and the shut-off valve. That means you have a leak between the meter and the customer-side shut-off valve.
- If it is not moving, then you have a leak between the customer-side shut-off valve and possibly somewhere in the house. Check toilets, washing machines, faucets, swimming pool or pond/fountain auto fill valves, etc., for any leak.

Step 7. To check a toilet for a leak : Flush the toilet and wait until the reservoir is full, add 2 or 3 drops of food coloring to the water in the reservoir.



Wait 15-30 minutes. If the water in the bowl changes colors, the flapper valve needs to be replaced



If the above steps are taken and there's a suspicion of a leak, the Town of Hillsborough's Public Works department is available to help. Please call (650)375-7400 and a member of the water department will be dispatched.