KWD
Kennebec Water District
SINCE 1899

Troubleshooting for Unusual Water Usage

Generally, water usage doesn't vary much but, when it does, it can be very frustrating and confusing to understand why. It can also be difficult to pinpoint the cause of the unusual usage.

First, you should ask yourself, ***"What has changed?"***

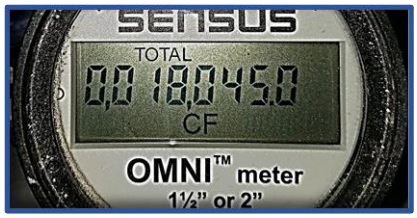
- **Have you forgotten to shut off a faucet, or is one leaking?**
  A faucet in an unfrequented location may have been left on, and outsides faucet can be turned on by falling ice and snow.

- **Have you filled a pool or been watering your lawn or garden more often?**
  Quarterly bills represent the past three months, it's easy to forget about these types of usages by the time you receive your bill.

- **Have you had any guests visit?**
  Holidays and other gatherings can increase the usage unexpectedly.

Leak Tests You Can Do Yourself

If these don't seem to be the cause of your high usage, below are some tests you can try.



1. **Do the "one-hour" test.**
   Read all the numbers on the water meter straight across from left to right and write those numbers down. NOTE: (if you have a light gray iPerl meter you will need to open the cover to see the register digits. If you have blue OMNI meter, you will need to open and close the cover until you see the word "Total" above the register digits.). Do not use any water on the property for one hour. After an hour has passed, read all the numbers on the meter

again. If the numbers changed, it means water has flowed through the meter and into the property. It is the owner's responsibility to locate and repair the source of this lost consumption (leak).

2. **Do the "all day" (or "all night") test.**
   Turn off all faucets and appliances that use water (like the ice maker) and read the meter before you leave for the day or before you go to bed. Take another meter reading when you return or awake. If the numbers on the meter changed, something (or someone) used water on your property. It is the owner's responsibility to locate and repair the source of this lost consumption (leak).

3. **Do the "pressure recharge" test.**
   I you have tried tests #1 and #2 but want another way to verify, you can try the pressure recharge test by using your internal valves. These valves are required by the utility and are owned and maintained by the customer *(caution: older valves may require replacement first)*. Close the valve on the incoming water pipe prior to the water meter. Wait for 5-10 minutes. When you open the valve again, one of two things will happen…

   1. If there is no open faucet or leak on the customer's side of the valve, you will not hear anything as both sides of the valve have maintained system pressure.
   2. If there is an open faucet or leak on the customer's side of the valve, you will hear the water moving as it is filling and pressurizing the pipes.

4. **Do the "food coloring" or "dye" toilet test.**
   Remove the cover from the tank of the toilet and put enough food coloring in the clear water of the toilet tank to darken the color of the water. Do not flush the toilet for 30 minutes. If the darkened water from the tank moves into the toilet bowl, it indicates that the flapper on the bottom of the toilet tank may need to be replaced. A worn or misaligned flapper can cause a toilet to 'run' constantly, which can be heard by listening closely near the bottom edge of the tank. It also causes the tank to refill automatically every 5 to 20 minutes.

5. **Do the "water level" toilet test.**
   Remove the cover from the tank of the toilet and look at the long open pipe standing up in the middle of the tank, called the overflow tube. The top of the water level should be below the top edge of this overflow tube. If the water level is up to the top of the overflow tube, water silently slips over the edge of the tube and right on down to the sewer. This will cause the toilet to constantly refill with new water. If you find that the water level is too high, the float mechanism in the tank may need to be adjusted or replaced.

NOTE: It is the property owner's responsibility to locate and repair all sources of lost water consumption (leaks) on the property.