

WATER TALK

Municipality of Middlesex Centre — November 2020

Detecting Water Leaks

If you are looking for ways to reduce your water bill, or if your bill is higher than expected, take a few minutes to check for water leaks.

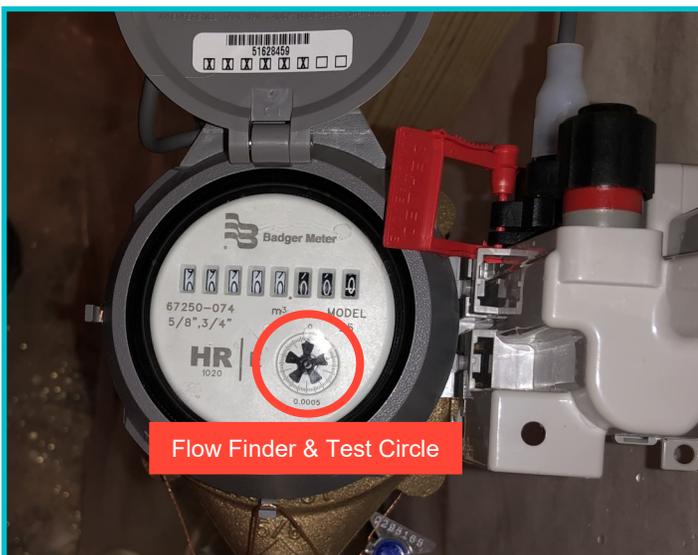
Average household leaks can add up to 40 cubic meters of water wasted every year. Serious leaks can waste even more. Common types of leaks found in the home include worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and other leaking valves. Repairing these leaks can save the average homeowner about 10 percent on their water bills.

The list is a good starting point to check for leaks. If you find a leak, you will want to take the necessary steps to correct the issue as soon as possible to prevent high water bills. As a homeowner, it is your responsibility to be aware of what is going on within your home. It is our responsibility as a water utility provider to bill as per the read on your water meter.

Check your Water Meter

The best way to find out if you have a leak is by checking your water meter. Here's how:

- ❑ **Turn off all water.** Start by making sure there isn't any water being used inside or outside your home including lawn or garden irrigation, toilets, clothes washers, dishwashers, faucets, icemakers, etc.
- ❑ **Check flow indicator.** Wait at least an hour, then open the lid on the water meter and check the "Flow Finder & Test Circle." If it is moving you have a leak somewhere in your house or yard.



Above are two commonly used water meters in Middlesex Centre. If you suspect a leak, you'll want to check the dial called the "Flow Finder & Test Circle" (shown in red circle). These are very sensitive and are useful in determining whether or not a plumbing leak exists. If water is not running in your home under a regular situation and the black wheel is still spinning, you probably have a leak.

All meters have one—sometimes they are triangles and red or blue in colour. A digital water meter will show a picture of a faucet.

Searching for Leaks in your House

Bathroom Checks

- ❑ **Toilets:** Perform a dye test in all your toilets. Take the lid off of the tank and place some drops of food colouring into the tank. Wait at least 30 minutes. Do not flush the toilet while waiting. After the dye has been in the tank of the toilet for at least 30 minutes, look in the bowl of the toilet. If it is any shade of the dye, there is a leak. The most common toilet leak is the flapper. Another cause is the fill valve. If the fill valve is the cause, there will be water draining into the overflow tube when the tank is full. Shine a flashlight into the overflow pipe to make the water easier to see when checking on it.
- ❑ **Faucets:** Listen and look for drips and turn on the taps to check for water going down the back of the faucet. Dripping faucets can waste hundreds of litres of water a month. Worn out washers are the main cause of these leaks.
- ❑ **Showerheads:** Listen and look for drips and turn on the taps to look for drips or stray sprays that are not coming out of the head itself.
- ❑ **In the Tub:** Listen and look for drips from the faucet and the handles.
- ❑ **Under the Sink:** Check for wet or damp areas under the sink.

Laundry/Utility Room/Garage Checks

- ❑ **Clothes Washer:** Check for wet or damp areas under or around the washer.
- ❑ **Washer Supply Line:** Check for any drips from the hose between the wall and the washer.
- ❑ **Water Heater:** Check for any wet or damp areas around the water heater. Also, check for any leaks from the pressure valve, located near the top of the tank.
- ❑ **Water Softener:** Listen for the sound of running water. This could indicate that your softener is stuck in recycle/regeneration mode. Place your softener in bypass mode to see if the meter stops moving.

Kitchen Checks

- ❑ **Faucets:** Listen and look for drips and turn on the taps to check for water going down the back of the faucet. Worn out washers are the main cause of these leaks.
- ❑ **Sprayer:** Check to make sure that there is no water leaking from the sprayer hose.



- ❑ **Under the Sink:** Check for any wet or damp areas under the sink.
- ❑ **Dishwasher:** Check for any wet or damp areas around the dishwasher.
- ❑ **Refrigerator (Ice Maker/Water Dispenser):** Check for any wet or damp areas around the back of the refrigerator.

Other Reasons for High Water Bills

- ❑ If you have added water to your swimming pool or hot tub recently, this could cause a high bill.
- ❑ If you have been watering new landscaping, either by hand or with your irrigation system, this could cause a high bill.
- ❑ If you have been washing your car, boat, or pressure washing your home, this could cause a high bill.

If you leave your home for an extended period, consider turning off the main water valve to your house. This will prevent your home from flooding if a serious leak develops while you are away.



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