

Your water meter can be a valuable tool in helping to monitor your water use. If you know how to read your meter, you can use it to determine how much water you use over a specific period of time. Your meter can tell you how much water you've used in a day, a week, a month, or just a few hours. Knowing how much you use will assist with conservation efforts and the detection of leaks. Reading your meter is easy following these simple steps.

### How to Read Your Water Meter

1. Locate your water meter. Most water meters are in a black, plastic box in the ground and are usually located near the road. For help locating your water meter, call the Smiths Water & Sewer Authority office. Our customer service representatives can usually point you in the general direction of your meter.
2. Lift the metal lid on the meter box by placing a screwdriver or similar tool inside the hole on the meter box lid and pulling upward gently.
3. Gently lift the black, plastic tab on the cover of the meter to expose the meter face.
4. The LCD screen on the meter is light-activated. In adequate sunshine, the LCD screen should activate in a few seconds. In cloudy weather or shady areas, it may be necessary to shine a flashlight on the photoelectric eye (see photo A) to activate the screen.
5. Once the screen is activated, a nine digit set of numbers will appear. This reading is a measure of all the water that has passed through the meter in its lifetime in gallons. To get the reading in hundreds of gallons, read the first five digits from left to right.



Photo A Showing Reading

Meter Number

Charges for water are based on water use in 100 gallon units.

Photoelectric Eye

Reading in Gallons

Decimal Point

Hundred Gallons Reading for Billing

Now that you have learned how to read your meter, you may wonder “How do I know how much water I have used?.” Calculating your water use is easy and all that’s required are meter readings and some basic math. Follow these simple steps to determine how much water you have used between two readings.

### How to Calculate Water Use in Hundreds of Gallons

1. In order to calculate water use for a specific period of time, you will need two meter readings; one taken at the beginning of the period (beginning reading) and one taken at the end of the period (end reading). It’s always a good idea to jot the meter reading down on paper so you won’t forget.
2. Remember for units of 100 gallons, read only the first five numbers on the meter face, from left to right.
3. Subtract the beginning reading from the end reading. The result will be your water use in hundreds of gallons.

For Example:

Tom read his meter on the first day of the month.. The meter reading was 23699. Tom read his meter again on the last day of the month. The meter reading on the last day of the month was 23741. Tom needs to subtract his beginning reading from the end reading to calculate his water use for the month.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Beginning Reading} \quad 23699 \\ - \\ \text{End Reading} \quad 23741 \\ \hline 00042 \end{array}$$

Tom’s water use for the month is 4,200 gallons



SWSA bills for water use in 100 gallon units. This example shows how to calculate water use for billing purposes. You can calculate your water use in 1 gallon units for the purpose of monitoring your water use and detecting leaks by reading all the numbers on the screen that appear before the decimal point.

You can also use your meter to help determine if there is a leak in your plumbing. For most water users, the first sign of a leak may be a higher than normal water bill. There are two ways you can use your meter to help detect leaks.

### Using Your Water Meter to Detect Leaks

1. Turn off all water using appliances. This includes dishwashers, washing machines, ice makers and any other water using appliances. You’ll also want to make sure that the toilet hasn’t flushed within the last few minutes.

2. Once you have turned off all water using appliances, take a reading from the water meter. Jot the reading down for later reference.
3. Wait at least two hours and do not use any water during the test period.
4. After two hours with no water use has passed, take another meter reading.
5. If the meter reading differs from the reading you took at the beginning of the test period it means you have a leak.

### Rate of Flow and Faucet Icon Leak Indicator

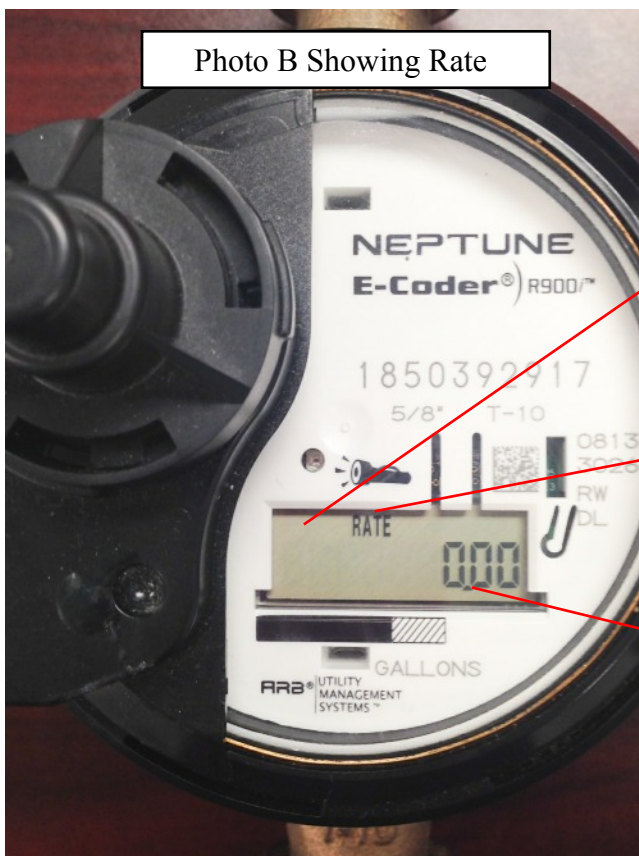


Photo B Showing Rate

Leak Indicator Faucet Icon Will Appear Here if Possible Leak Detected

The Word "RATE" Indicates Rate of Flow Mode

Rate of Flow Indicated in Gallons Per Minute

Your Neptune E-Coder R-900 water meter has a couple of handy features to help with leak detection. In photo B, notice the word "Rate" on the LCD screen. The word "Rate" on your water meter means rate of flow. The numbers shown on the meter when it is in "rate" mode is the amount of water in gallons per minute that is passing through the meter at that moment. If a rate of flow other than "0" is indicated and you have all faucets and water using appliances shut off, this indicates a leak. There is also a leak indicator faucet icon that will appear either solid or flashing when a possible leak has been detected. See Photo B for reference.

If the leak indicator icon appears as *solid* (not flashing), a possible continuous leak has been detected. The *flashing* faucet icon indicates a possible intermittent leak. In either case, check the last digit on your meter screen to see if the numbers are incrementing. If the numbers are incrementing, and you are not using water, you have a leak.

### **WHAT DO I NEED TO DO IF I HAVE A LEAK?**

If you have followed these procedures and a leak is indicated, it is always best to call a licensed plumber to make repairs. Smiths Water & Sewer Authority does not service leaks on the customer side of the meter.