

The water line running to your home is "metered" for accountability and billing purposes. A leak on your line can be very costly. Yet, even a very small leak can be found through trying a few simple techniques and can save you from a costly surprise.

If the water use indicated on your bill is higher than normal, you might have a leak on your side of the water meter. Here are a few steps you can take before calling a plumber.

Check the Pressure Relief Valve on the hot water tank. Sometimes these valves are plumbed directly into a drain and may be leaking without your knowledge. If you can't remove the drainpipe to check for a leak listen for a hissing sound, it may be leaking.

Check the toilet for leaks by removing the top off the tank and listening very closely. If you hear any hissing at all, try to locate where it is coming from. If you locate the area where the leak is coming from, assess it and determine if you can fix it. If you can't, then call a plumber.

- If nothing is noticeable, add some food coloring and put a couple of drops in the tank (not the bowl). Wait several minutes and if you have coloring in the bowl, you have a leak in the flapper at the bottom of the tank that is allowing water to seep through. At this point you can assess if you want to do the repair yourself, or call a plumber.
- If you have more toilets, repeat the process with each toilet to make sure you don't have more than one problem.

Check carefully all shower heads, faucets and hose bibs, even a steady drip when your faucets are off can be costly over time. Don't forget refrigerator ice machines, washing machines and dryers with a steam feature.

If there is no indication of a leak inside the house, check the line running from the meter to the house. While this may sound difficult, you can save money if you can locate the leak for the plumber.

- If you know you have a shut-off valve by the house, shut it off temporarily and check the meter by removing the lid and watching the dial on top of the meter.
- If you can't see the meter head, try digging around because they sometimes have dirt or grass covering the top of them. Once you locate it and the valve is turned off by the house, watch the meter to see if it is turning. If it is still turning, then the leak is between the meter and the house. That is, unless you have a leaking valve, and this very common with these older bronze gate valves. Then, your leak may also be inside the house.
- Look for signs of a leak such as: soft muddy areas, grass that is greener than the rest or growing much faster than other areas. If you see such an

obvious sign, call the plumber or assess if you can make a repair yourself.
IF YOU DETECT A WATER LEAK ON THE STREET SIDE OF THE METER,
PLEASE CALL DAVID PAULL: 301-751-2314.