

**Water Bill Looking Too High?**

Usually it is not too hard to find out what has caused a sudden spike in your water bill. Once you find a problem, you'll probably know how to make corrections, or when to seek professional help. Here are some items to investigate, to check out what has made the bill so high.

**Examine Your Bill**

Pull out last month's bill, or go to Online Billing (if you are registered) for comparisons.

- ☐ Do you see any penalty charges?
- ☐ Are there any carry over balances from your prior bill?
- ☐ Did the rate you are charged per cubic foot of water increase?
- ☐ Were you billed for more water this month than in the same month of prior years?
- ☐ Check your meter read and match it to the read on your bill. Your read

Is your bill more expensive prior bills? In Online Billing, you can compare monthly costs and rates in Consumption or Service Summary.

Online you can compare average daily use in Consumption.

**Your Household Inside**

- ☐ Did you have guests or extra laundry demands last month?
- ☐ Do you see or hear water running or dripping from toilets, faucets or sinks?
- ☐ Is there a silent leak in a toilet?

To check, put a few drops of food coloring in the tank. Wait ten minutes. If the water in the bowl is now colored, you have a leak!

- ☐ Have you had any repairs made in the last month?

If so, did they use or release water in the process?

**Your Household Outside**

- ☐ Did you wash the windows or cars last month?
- ☐ Did you power wash?
- ☐ Are re-circulating pumps working on any ornamental water features?
- ☐ Do you have any new grass or plants?
- ☐ Do you have a garden?
- ☐ Have you increased the frequency or duration of watering recently?

- ☐ Are there wet spots in the yard or at valve boxes which might indicate leaks?
- ☐ Do you have a pond or water feature?
- ☐ Is the timer working?
- ☐ Have the frequency and/or duration of the watering cycles changed?

### **Swimming Pool**

- ☐ Does the water level in the pool drop more than ¼ inch per week?
- ☐ If you have an auto-fill system, is it working properly?
- ☐ Have you filled or drained the pool recently?

### **Water Use Higher Than Average?**

Usage during winter months is mainly for cleaning, sanitation, and consumption. This averages out to about 90 gallons per person per day.

Usage in other seasons reflects discretionary uses including landscaping, evaporative coolers, and pools. Your household's average may be higher depending on:

Landscape size, planting selections, and irrigation

Swimming pool or water feature size

Water efficiency of plumbing and appliances

Personal habits (shower length, bath frequency)

Presence of leaks

### **Compare Your Average Use per Person per Day**

Usage per person per day = (Gallons used in month ÷ Days in billing period (60)) ÷ Number of people in household

Usage Varies by Season

<b>SUMMER (average = 161 gallons per day per person)</b>	<b>WINTER (average = 90 gallons per day per person)</b>
<b>Drinking 10%</b>	<b>Drinking 5%</b>
<b>Bathing 19%</b>	<b>Bathing 11%</b>
<b>Toilets 28%</b>	<b>Toilets 15%</b>
<b>Household cleaning 31%</b>	<b>Household Cleaning 17%</b>
<b>Outdoor Use 52%</b>	<b>Outdoor Use 12%</b>

The City of St. Helens water bills are measured in cubic feet. There are 748 gallons in 100 cubic feet.

A good way to check for leaks is to look at your water meter when all the water is off in the house. If the meter is spinning you have a leak.

Once you have performed this self-check of your facilities, if there is still no reasonable explanation for increased usage, continue with contact the City of St. Helens Water Department at 503-397-6272 to review your current bill and past consumption history.

Mention that you have used High Water Consumption Checklist.