

# HOW TO READ YOUR WATER METER

Do you ever wonder how much water you and your family use per day or per week? Monitoring your water meter is an excellent way to track your water usage and detect water leaks on your private plumbing system.

Water meters record the amount of water each customer uses, in gallons, the same way as an odometer measures the mileage traveled by a car. Here are a few simple steps to help you monitor water use by simply reading your water meter on a set schedule:

## Step 1: Locate Your Water Meter

Most water meters are located on the property line at either the front or rear of the property receiving water service. Your water meter should be in either an enclosed cement or plastic meter box with a removable lid to expose the register. For your safety, use a tool, such as a large screwdriver, to remove the lid from the top of the meter box. Visually examine the area around the meter to ensure your safety. Creatures, such as black widow spiders, wasps, snakes, gophers, etc., are known to nest inside meter boxes. Once you remove the lid, you will probably need to remove some dirt off the top of the water meter and wipe off the glass cover on top of the water meter with a wet paper towel to make the register clearly visible.

## Step 2: Read Your Water Meter

Reading your water meter is easy. Water meters usually have 6 to 8 digits (most of Southern's water meters will have 7 digits) on the face of the register, which reflect the total number of gallons used since the water meter was installed. When reading your water meter, simply write down all of the digits shown on the register from left to right. Carefully replace the meter lid after securing the meter reading.

## Step 3: Calculate Your Water Usage

To calculate your water use, first select a starting point at which to read your water meter (e.g., Friday at 9 a.m.). Second, record the reading and the date at your selected starting point. A day, week or month later, read your water meter again. Third, subtract the first reading from the second reading to determine out how much water, in gallons, you have used for the time period selected.

As an example:

Second reading	0,083,300
First reading	<u>0,076,400</u>
Water used (in gallons)	6,900

Water meters record water usage in gallons. Southern Utilities Company (Southern) charges for all water used in thousands of gallons. Assuming the above example represents a time period of one (1) month, Southern would have billed you for 6,000 gallons water used based upon the above meter readings.

## Step 4: Check for Leaks

The "flow indicator" dial on the register rotates when water is passing through the meter and being registered as usage. This "flow indicator" dial is normally star or triangle shaped and is solely utilized to detect the slightest flow of water through the water meter; however, the dial does not indicate the volume of water passing through the meter. To check for leaks on your private plumbing system, turn off all water uses inside and outside your residence, or facility receiving water service, including icemakers, evaporative coolers, water softeners, etc., and watch the "flow indicator" dial for at least five (5) minutes. If the "flow indicator" dial does not rotate, no leak is indicated on your private plumbing system. If the "flow indicator" dial does rotate, a leak on your private plumbing system is indicated. Regularly checking for leaks on your private plumbing system may save you money and act to conserve drinking water for all.