

## DON'T LET MONEY AND WATER DRAIN AWAY

In just 3 months, a leak the size of a standard pencil eraser can mean the loss of 1,181,500 gallons—or enough to fill an average-sized swimming pool.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEAKY PIPES

Leaky pipes are often the cause of higher than usual water usage. Left unattended, the problem could worsen. Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency is responsible for maintaining the water service line up to and including the meter box. The Agency is unable to perform repairs on private property, provide advice for specific repairs or recommend plumbers.

The property owner is responsible for all water consumption past the meter box whether concealed or underground.

A higher than usual water bill and a call from the Agency that your meter is showing unusual

“downstream demand” is enough to cause great concern. Often a

customer meter is a fair distance

from the home and the culprit leak may be difficult to locate.

Depending on the ease or severity of the situation a professional plumber may be warranted. The aim of this brochure is to help our customers understand the basics of leaks and how it relates to their

water bills.



Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency

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Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR LEAK

*High Quality Water at an Affordable Cost*



Winter/Spring 2017

Customer Information

## Location and Prevention

Common causes for water line breaks are extreme heat and cold. During the warm months the increased water demand may allow your water to locate and break through weaknesses in your water pipes. Of course the cold winter months are a time to worry about frozen pipes and water lines.

One thing you can do right away and anytime you suspect a water leak, or would just like to sleep at night after a heavy cold snap, would be to check your meter. To do so requires a pencil, paper and watch.

- Make sure all water is in the off position around the yard and inside the house (including swamp cooler).
- Go to your meter and write down the numbers on the dial of your meter.
- Wait approximately 15-20 minutes.
- If all water is shut off and your number has increased within that 15-20 minutes, you may very well have a leak somewhere creating downstream demand.



Still can't get your head around how one small break could cause a high water bill? Download the Leak Loss Calculations App by the Missouri Rural Water Association <http://morruralwater.org/what-we-offer/>



Tips on looking for leaks ...

- Preventing freezing pipes is essential here in the High Desert. If you've lived here long you will know how unexpected it can be to wake up to temperatures well below freezing.
- To reduce risk we suggest the following:
  - Wrap and Tape: Insulate exposed pipes and faucets outside the home.
  - Locate and insulate plumbing within unheated spaces such as garages and sheds.
  - Know where your meter is located and make sure you have a customer valve. If a break does occur, you can turn off your water more quickly.
  - Should you plan to be away from your property for some time, turn off your customer valve. Then open and drain household and irrigation lines to prevent freezing (winter months).
  - When away, it doesn't hurt to ask a trusted friend or neighbor to keep an eye on things and check your home and property for signs of a break, freezing or leaks.
- To check your toilet, remove the top off the tank and listen very closely for a hissing sound. If nothing is noticeable add some food coloring in the tank (not the bowl). Wait several minutes. If you have coloring in the bowl, you have a leak.
- Water leaks at your shower head, kitchen and bathroom faucets are pretty straightforward to identify. The answer may simply be a new "washer".
- Irrigation systems can often cause high water usage. Begin by shutting down the system and checking your meter (see first panel). Once you have determined your irrigation system is the cause seek help from a plumber or go online for tips on troubleshooting your irrigation system.
- With all cases be prepared to bring in a plumber. Not all leaks are an easy fix and in some cases a leak may be very hard to locate.

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