

# How Your Water Bill Is Measured, Read, and Billed

The City of South Gate provides water to over 14,000 customers. The City reads water meters monthly to determine the amount of water that customers use as well the water bill.

## How Do Water Meters Measure Water Usage?

The City's water meters are mechanical and measure the volume of water as it passes through the meter. The passing of water rotates the internal mechanism that changes the odometer. If there is no water movement through the meter body, the odometer will not change. The odometers capture the amount of water that is used citywide as every customer has at least one water meter on their property.

## How Does The City Read The Meters?

The City's meter readers inspect water meters monthly. The meter readers visually read the meters and manually enter the data on an electronic handheld device called a Radix. The Radix downloads the meter reads into a billing software to calculate the amount of water usage. That information is used to generate the water bills monthly.

## What Causes High Water Bills?

The number one cause to a high water bill is a water leak. Leaks can occur anywhere on your plumbing system, irrigation system, kitchen, bathroom fixtures, etc. Sometimes leaks are visible and sometimes they are not, such as when the leak is underground. The most common leak is a toilet leak. A malfunctioning toilet can cause your water to continually run into the bowl and if undetected waste water and cause a high water bill. You can identify a toilet leak as follows:

- Remove the tank lid of the toilet.
- Flush your toilet as usual.
- Drop about 4 to 5 food coloring drops in the toilet tank.
- Replace the toilet lid and wait 20 to 30 minutes.
- Survey the toilet bowl, if the water is colored you have a leak.

## Can The Water Meter Cause a High Water Bill?

High bills can sometimes be due to a meter malfunction and, in a few cases, the meter read obtained can be wrong. If you have a high water bill, you can contact the City to verify if the meter read was correct. City staff will visit you to inspect the meter and confirm the read. At the request of customers, the City will test the meter for accuracy for a nominal fee. The fee will be waived should the meter test above 101 percent inaccurate. Meters rarely register fast as they most commonly slow down as the internal parts wear down and under report water usage.

## Who to Call With Questions or High Bill Concerns?

For all billing inquiries, please contact Water Customer Service at (323) 563-9586.

