

**Service Line Leaks & Water Meter Leaks
(continued)**

There are normally three general locations at which these leaks can occur.

1. Leaks within the meter vault: If on the County's side of the angle valve, will be repaired by the County. The investigative fee is waived and water usage, if any, associated with a leak in this location will be considered for a billing adjustment.
2. Leaks within the meter vault: If on the property owner's side of the second angle valve or dual check valve, will be repaired by the County. The investigative fee will apply and water usage associated with a leak in this location will be considered for a billing adjustment.
3. Leaks in the service line on the property owner's side of the meter vault are the responsibility of the property owner. An investigative fee will apply. Water usage associated with a leak in this location will be eligible for a one time billing adjustment following the repair of the line by a plumber licensed to work in Frederick County, Maryland.

Even a small hole in your water service line can result in excessive leakage and may contribute to higher than normal water bills (see the table below). If you need further assistance detecting leaks in your service line and/or meter vault, please call our office 301-600-2354.

A continuous leak at 60 pounds per square inch (psi) from a hole the size illustrated below has an estimated water loss (waste) in the amounts shown.			
Diameter of Stream	Day	Month	Quarter (3 Months)
1/4-inch	13,128	393,833	1,181,500
3/16-inch	7,400	222,000	666,000
1/8-inch	3,289	9,867	296,000
1/16-inch	822	24,667	74,000
1/32-inch	264	7,920	23,760

For Residential Customers:

Residential customers experiencing an underground service line leak shall be allowed to request a **one-time** bill adjustment following the service line leak repair by a plumber licensed to work in Frederick County, Maryland. **This adjustment does not apply to interior plumbing leaks.** The customer must submit a written request to the Division of Water & Sewer Utilities, which includes:

- Method and location of repair, including the plumber's receipt with their license number
- A copy of the plumbing permit
- Cause of the service line failure
- Material type of the service line that failed

This will be a one-time per house (per owner) adjustment. The owner must be aware that use of the adjustment for one occurrence precludes the use of this adjustment for a second or subsequent leak at that residence. If the customer purchases another home served by Frederick County, the customer would be eligible for the one-time adjustment for the new property.

Following verification by the Division that the underground leak has been repaired, the bill amount (for both water and sewer charges) will be adjusted based on the account's "average" usage, based on the previous consecutive four (4) quarters. In addition, the DWSU will also provide a 2nd adjustment for the subsequent billing period. This adjustment will also be based on the account's "average" usage. If, in the DWSU's sole discretion, there is not enough appropriate account usage history, usually one full year, the customer class average will be used.

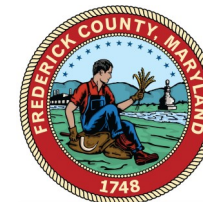
For Non-Residential Customers:

Non-residential customers experiencing an underground leak shall be allowed to request a one-time bill adjustment following the same procedures listed above for residential; **however, the bill adjustment would only apply to the sewer portion of the bill.**

**Locating & Correcting
Water Leaks at
Your Property**



*Prepared By:
Frederick County
Division of
Water & Sewer Utilities
301-600-2354*



Leaking plumbing fixtures within a property can cause high water bills, excessive loss of water, and increased flow to the sewer system.

Toilets

Many leaks occur in toilets and may not be immediately recognized since there is no visible sign of a leak. Leaks in toilets can occur at the overflow pipe or at the plunger ball or flap valve on the bottom of the toilet tank. To check toilets for leakage, take the tank lid off and flush. The water level should come up to about a half inch or so below the overflow pipe. If necessary, adjust the float to insure proper tank water level.

Toilets can have silent leaks caused by an improperly seating plunger ball or flap valve. These leaks are more difficult to detect since there is usually no visible sign of water flowing down the drain. If the toilet plunger ball or flap valve does not seat properly water slowly flows from the toilet tank into the bowl and into the drain. This type of leak can be detected by placing a small amount of food coloring into the toilet tank (Do Not Flush The Toilet). Wait for about 10 minutes, then check to see if the food coloring appears in the toilet bowl. If it does then the toilet has a silent leak. If you have already checked the toilet tank overflow pipe, the leak is being caused by an improperly seating plunger or flap valve.

These leaks can usually be fixed with parts from your local hardware store or you may want to have a licensed plumber make the repair.

Faucets

Water leaks can also occur at sink and bath faucets as well as outside hose bibs. In most cases these leaks are caused by worn washers or "O" rings. Even a slow drip from a faucet can have a big impact on your quarterly water consumption. A two drop per minute drip from a single faucet can translate into more than 1,000 gallons of wasted water during a quarterly water billing cycle. Larger faucet leaks with a continuous stream about the size of a pencil point can increase water consumption by more than 10,000 gallons in a quarterly billing period.

To repair a leaking faucet turn off the water supply line to the faucet, disassemble the leaking fixture valve, replace the washer and reassemble the valve. Turn the water supply back on and check for leaks. **If you do not feel comfortable attempting this type of repair, you may want to have a licensed plumber make the repair.**

Outside Taps (Hose Bibs)

Most homes have at least two hose bibs for outside water use convenience. These can also leak and cause excessive water loss. Another leakage problem associated with outside hose bibs may occur when they are left on and garden hoses are attached, relying only on the spray nozzle to stop the water flow. Most hoses are not designed for continuous pressure and the valve mechanism in the spray nozzle is not as reliable as the valve assembly in the hose bib. Occasionally leaks develop in the hose or a sudden catastrophic rupture can occur causing thousands of gallons of water loss before being detected by the occupant of the home. Also, leaving hose bibs on during freezing weather can cause pipes or hoses to rupture and create severe leaks.

To prevent unauthorized water use from hose bibs, locate the water supply shut off valve for each hose bib inside the home and make sure this valve is closed after use. Sometimes children may inadvertently turn hose bibs on and forget to turn them off.

Leaks in toilets, faucets, and/or hose bibs are the responsibility of the property owner. If we are called to check for a leak and find any of the above are the cause an investigative fee will apply. No billing adjustment will be applied to the account.



Service Line Leaks and Water Meter Leaks

Water leaks can also develop in the property's water service line and/or meter vault. Although such leaks can be difficult to detect, there are some telltale signs which may indicate that you have a leak in your service line. You should be continuously observant for:

- **Wet spots in your yard between the meter vault and your house/building.**
- **The sound of running water or a hissing sound which persists even when water is not being used in the home/building.**
- **Water leaking into your basement or crawl space near the location of your water service line.**
- **A noticeable loss in the home's normal water pressure or flow.**
- **Water bills showing progressively higher water consumption that cannot be explained otherwise.**

If you think you may have a leak in your service line and/or meter vault, find and turn off the main shut off valve within your home/building. Place your ear on the main water line coming into your home/building. If you have a hissing noise you probably have a leak. Our office can assist you in determining the location of the leak. There is a minimal investigative fee for this assistance. However, it can identify unintentional water loss that can lead to increased water charges billed to your account.

NOTE: ALL repairs WITHIN THE METER VAULT are to be performed by the DWSU staff. Individuals, including licensed plumbers, DO NOT have the authority to access the vault.