

# HOW TO READ THE WATER METER FOR YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS

- To monitor your water use
  - To check for leaks



## *HIGHLIGHTS*

We encourage you to check both our monthly bills and our water meter between billings to monitor your water use and look for signs of a water leak.

Our rate structures are designed to encourage conservation, so checking our meter will help you monitor the effectiveness of your conservation actions and investments.

To find out if you have a leak(s) in your plumbing system, please check the water flow indicator on our meter when you are not intentionally using water.

National research indicates that leaks account for about 14% of indoor residential water use. Toilets are one of the most common places for leaks.

If you fix a non-irrigation leak, please contact the OWASA Customer Service staff at 537-4343 regarding our policy on when we can make account adjustments after a leak is repaired. For more information, please contact us at 537-4343 or [webmaster@owasa.org](mailto:webmaster@owasa.org).

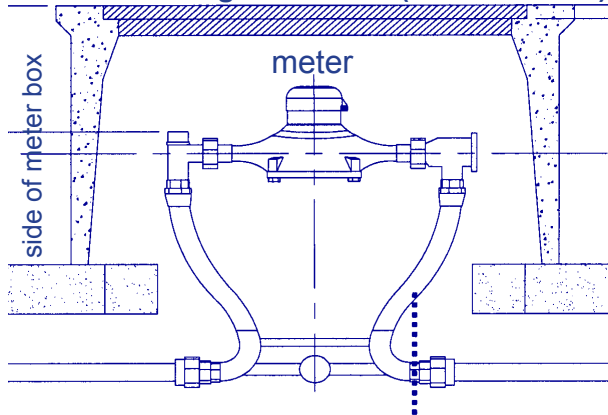


Orange Water and Sewer Authority

*A public, non-profit agency providing water, sewer and reclaimed water services to the Carrboro-Chapel Hill community.*

400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro, NC 27510  
968-4421 [webmaster@owasa.org](mailto:webmaster@owasa.org) [www.owasa.org](http://www.owasa.org)

## meter cover at ground level (cross section)



## WHERE IS THE OWASA WATER METER FOR YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS?

Our water meter is usually at or near the boundary between a public street right-of-way and your property.

The property/right-of-way boundary is normally several feet from the edge of a paved road or the street curb.

Our meter is typically installed in a metal box with a concrete cover about 10" by 15." A hinged metal hatch in the cover is opened to read the meter as shown on the front of this brochure.

If you have difficulty finding the OWASA meter serving your residence or business, please call our Customer Service staff at (919) 537-4343.

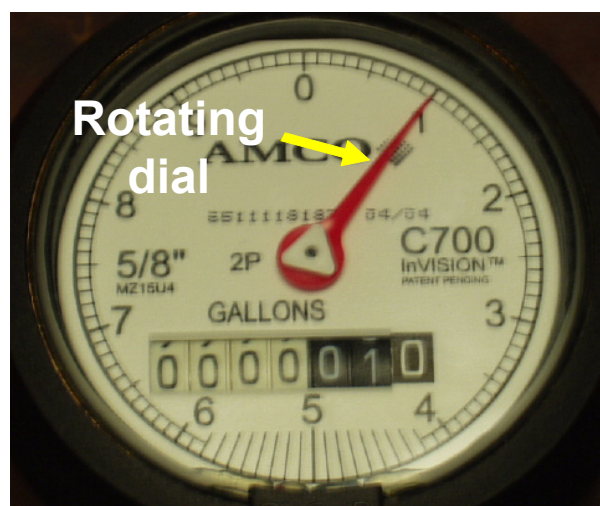
## HOW CAN I READ THE METER TO FIND OUT HOW MUCH WATER I USE?

1. Record the meter numbers from left to right and then add the number indicated by a rotating dial. The rotating dial shows single gallons of use; the zero numeral at the far right of the numbered wheels does not change.

For example, if the meter reading is



with the red rotating dial close to the 1 as in the photo below, then the meter reading is 11 gallons.

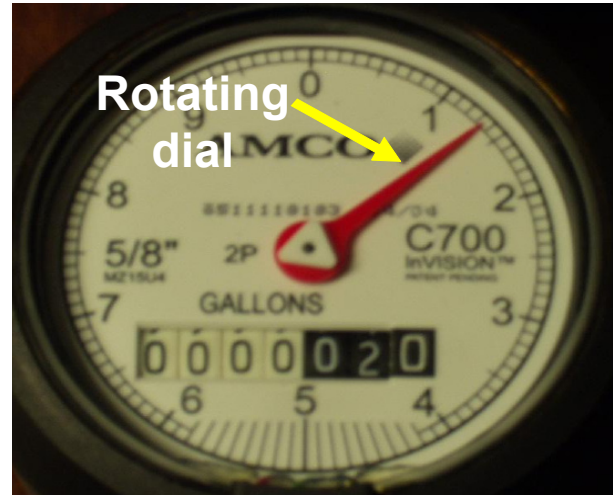


2. Write down this reading along with the date (and time if you wish).
3. Take a second reading later and subtract the first reading from the second reading.

For example, if the meter reading is



with the red rotating dial close to the 1 as shown on the right, then the meter reading is about 21 gallons.



4. The water use between the two readings is 10 gallons, which is the difference between 21 gallons and 11 gallons.

Please note that under current policy, OWASA rounds down to the nearest thousand gallons for billing purposes.

If you have any questions about reading your meter, please call us at (919) 537-4343.

## USING THE METER TO CHECK YOUR PLUMBING SYSTEM FOR LEAKS

If either the red rotating dial or the small triangular water flow indicator is turning when there is no intentional water use at your residence, business, etc., then there is a leak somewhere in the private plumbing system.

If the red rotating dial is turning slowly, that indicates a small leak or drip. If it is turning rapidly, that indicates a larger leak.

Please note that on some meters, the flow indicator may be a wheel instead of a triangle, and the flow indicator may not be at the center of the meter.



**Water flow indicator (the small triangle in the center of the meter shown above.)**

## PLEASE REPAIR LEAKS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO AVOID WATER WASTE

If you have difficulty finding a leak or are not able to fix a leak, we recommend that you contact a licensed plumber or other knowledgeable person.

You may need to turn off the water service by using the master shut-off valve in your plumbing system until the leak is repaired. Please be aware that using your shut-off valve will not stop a leak in the private water service line between our meter and the shut-off. If there is a leak in the service line, a plumber or OWASA can turn off the water at our meter.

When you repair a non-irrigation leak, you may be able to receive an account adjustment. Please contact our Customer Service staff at 919-537-4343, send an e-mail to [webmaster@owasa.org](mailto:webmaster@owasa.org) or visit the Customer Service section of our website, [www.owasa.org](http://www.owasa.org), for more information on our policy regarding account adjustments when leaks are fixed.

If you have difficulty finding a leak or are not able to fix a leak, we recommend that you contact a licensed plumber or other knowledgeable person.

You may need to turn off the water service by using your master shut-off valve until the leak is found and repaired by a qualified person.

In accord with the Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Orange County Water Conservation Ordinances for OWASA customers, leaks must be repaired within 10 days of a formal notice by OWASA.

## TOILETS ARE ONE OF THE MOST COMMON PLACES FOR LEAKS

To check a toilet for leaks, you can put food coloring in the toilet tank, wait 15 to 20 minutes without flushing, and then check whether there is food color in the toilet bowl. If so, there is a leak, probably in the flapper at the bottom of the toilet tank.



## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Please contact Customer Service at (919) 537-4343, send an e-mail to [webmaster@owasa.org](mailto:webmaster@owasa.org) or visit or write to us at 400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro, NC 27510 (near the Barnes Street intersection with Jones Ferry Road).

***WATER CONSERVATION:*** part of our ***SUSTAINABLE*** quality of life!