

How Much Water Do I Use?

How many customers ask the question "how much water does the average person use each day?". The answer to this question requires a definition of the average person. In general, per capita water use ranges from about 40 to 80 gallons per day (gpd). The following chart shows estimates of personal water use:

The following table shows the amount of water that can be lost (and billed to your account) for various size leaks.

USE	GALLONS/MINUTE
Running the Tap	2 - 5 gallons per minute
Taking a Shower	2 - 7 gallons per minute
Taking a Bath	20 - 60 gallons per bath
Washing a full load of clothes	25 - 40 gallons per load
Flushing the Toilet	1.5 - 7 gallons per flush
Running an Automatic Dishwasher	10 - 20 gallons per load

Leak Size		Gallons Per Day	Gallons Per Month
	A dripping leak consumes:	15 gallons	450 gallons
•	A 1/32 in. leak consumes:	264 gallons	7,920 gallons
▪	A 1/16 in. leak consumes:	943 gallons	28,300 gallons
●	A 1/8 in. leak consumes:	3,806 gallons	114,200 gallons
●	A 1/4 in. leak consumes:	15,226 gallons	456,800 gallons
●	A 1/2 in. leak consumes:	60,900 gallons	1,827,000 gallons

An average of 20% of all toilets leak!!

Toilet leaks are a common but potentially large source of water loss. A leaking toilet can waste up to several hundred gallons per day. In some cases, it's easy to identify a leaking toilet. If you have to jiggle the handle to make a toilet stop running, if you regularly hear sounds coming from a toilet that is not being used, or if a toilet periodically turns the water on (i.e. "runs") for 15 seconds or so without you touching the handle, you can be fairly certain that you have a leak. But sometimes, even if your toilet doesn't have any of these symptoms, it's still possible that it is leaking. These "silent leaks" can go undetected for long periods of time, potentially wasting thousands of gallons of water. **Leaky toilets can usually be repaired inexpensively by replacing the flapper.**

The U.S. EPA reports that 90% of all high water bills are caused by leaks.

Irrigation Systems

An irrigation system at 60 PSI with a leak the thickness of a dime can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month.

What Is Low Head Drainage?

Water that flows onto the sidewalk or curb after the sprinklers turn off, but then stops after a few minutes, is due to a phenomena called "low head drainage". This occurs when the sprinkler system is installed on a sloped area. The slope does not need to be very high, a change of elevation of less than a foot will often create low head drainage. After the sprinklers are turned off, the water in the pipes drains out through the lowest sprinkler heads and is replaced with air. The easiest way to tell if you have low head drainage is to watch the sprinklers when you turn them on. If they spit and spew lots of air when the valve is turned on, then you have a low head drainage problem. Obviously the water that drains out of the pipes is wasted. The spewing and spitting of air every time you turn on the sprinklers also puts a lot of stress on the pipe and sprinklers.

Leaking Valve or Low Head Drainage?

If you have water flowing from a sprinkler head continuously, even when the sprinkler system is off, then the problem is a leaking control valve. The primary difference between low head drainage and a leaking valve is that low head drainage results in water flowing from the lowest sprinklers for a while after they run, but the drainage stops after the pipes are fully drained. (It may take several hours for the water to drain out of the pipes.) If a valve is leaking the water will run out of the lowest sprinkler head all the time, 24 hours a day, every day. A typical indication that the problem is a leaking control valve is moss or algae growing on the sidewalk due to the constant flow of water. Another common sign is puddles of water around the lowest sprinklers that never dry out.

...An irrigation system should be checked each spring before use to make sure it was not damaged by frost or freezing.

Keep in mind that your private plumbing system begins on your side of the water meter, so anything beyond that point is up to you to fix. Consider contacting a licensed plumber to help find or fix the problem.

**Additional information can be found online at
www.harwichwater.com**

**If you have any questions please feel free to contact
the Harwich Water Department at 508-432-0304.
The office is open Monday-Friday from 8-4:30**

