

## Watering tips & usage FAQ

THE COLONY, Texas — In recent days, the city's [Customer Services Department](#) has fielded many queries from residents regarding their latest water bill. Indeed, usage amounts for the previous five-week billing cycle show high consumption increases for many residents throughout the city.

Similar circumstances have been reported in other cities as well. Drought conditions and the additional week in the billing cycle have attributed to the increase in consumption. Meter readings are being verified and a leak-check is being conducted for each resident who calls in with a concern about their bill.



**We continue to encourage residents who have concerns about their bills to contact us at 972-624-3100.** Our Customer Service team will make every effort to individually verify meter readings and go over the usage data with each customer that contacts us. **(See Page 4 for water-cost calculations.)**

In the meantime, we would like to share some information about sprinkler use, swimming pools, and other watering tips that are proving to be helpful in the course of addressing concerns shared by residents regarding their water usage:

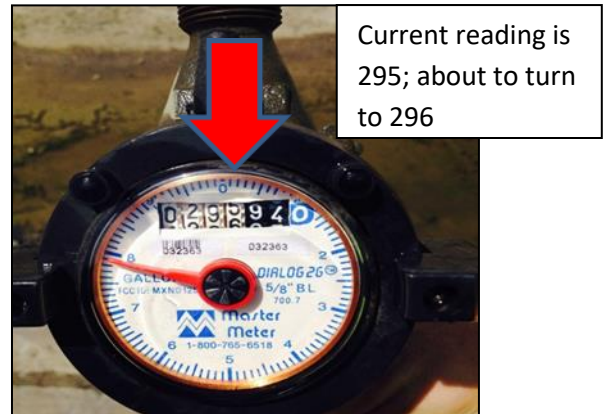
### **How much water does my sprinkler system use?**

To calculate sprinkler usage, average of 5 gallons per minute per sprinkler head, multiplied by the number of sprinkler heads, multiplied by the number of stations. Multiply that number by the number of times your water in a week or month. Example:

- 12 minutes x 5 gallons per minute = 60 gallons for one sprinkler head
- 60 gallons x 5 sprinkler heads in a station/zone = 300 gallons used per station/zone
- 300 gallons x 10 stations = 3,000 gallons used for one watering
- 3,000 gallons x 3 days per week = 9,000 for one week of watering
- 9,000 gallons x 4 weeks = 36,000 gallons used to water the lawn in a 4-week cycle
- Additional week of watering in a 5-week bill cycle = 45,000 gallons in sprinkler use alone

### **Another way to see how much water your irrigation system is using:**

Open your meter box lid and take a picture of the dial prior to starting irrigation. Once your cycles have completed, take another picture of the dial. Subtract the numbers on the white dials from your pictures. This will give you a good idea of how much water is going through your irrigation system for one watering. Remember, you are billed in thousands. *Note: Some may have an LCD register (gold digital box on meter). The underlined numbers are the reading for this type of register.*



Example: Number prior to watering is 20. Number after watering is 25. The irrigation system used approximately 5,000 gallons of water for one watering.

### **How much water does my pool use to refill from evaporating?**

The average amount of water evaporation per day is 1/2-inch. Multiplied by 7 days, that's 3.5 inches of water evaporated in a week. To refill the pool 3.5 inches, use this calculation:

Length x Width x Depth (3.5 inches evaporation loss divided by 12) x 7.48 = number of gallons to refill from evaporation. Example: 13 x 32 x .292 x 7.48 = 908 gallons to refill per week, or 3,632 gallons per month.

### **The Do's and Don'ts for watering your yard**

- **DO:** Water in dry weather.
- **DO:** Water early in the morning.
- **DO:** Water every 5-6 days in hot weather.
- **DO:** Use sprinklers that are close to the ground rather than high in the air, because larger drops are better than fine mist.
- **DON'T:** Water from mid-morning to late afternoon. You will lose 1/3 of your water to evaporation. Try watering before 10 a.m.
- **DON'T:** Overwater because it causes valuable nutrients to wash away.
- **DON'T:** Water too frequently because it causes a shallow root system to develop.
- **DON'T:** Water at night because the grass stays wet and encourages the development of disease.

### **How long should I water, and how do I know if I've watered enough?**

Let the sprinkler soak an area for about 30 minutes. Dig a spade into the ground and see for yourself whether the water is getting down deep enough; if not water for another 30 minutes.

To determine if you've watered enough, step on a patch of grass. If the blades spring up, then no watering is necessary. If they don't, then you need to continue watering.

### **If I have a leak, how much water is being wasted?**

Water wasted at 40 pounds of pressure over a 24-hour period:

- 1/32" leak wastes 180 gallons
- 1/16" leak wastes 690 gallons
- 1/8" leak wastes 2,760 gallons
- 1/4" leak wastes 11,030 gallons

#### **To be safe:**

- Check every faucet and toilet for leaks. A leak can waste a lot of water every day, so repair leaks immediately.
- Open the tank of the toilet up and put a few drops of food coloring into it. Then see if the coloring is going into the bowl, if so then you have a leak.

**And how much is that wasted water costing me?** *(NOTE: This is a general guideline and should not be relied upon as a precise source for information.)*

Most homes in The Colony have a 3/4-inch pipe. Based on that size and assuming average pressure, water flows at approximately 23 gallons/minute, or 1,410 gallons per hour.

Running a sprinkler system with one broken head for 30 minutes could result in approximately 700 gallons of water loss. Multiply that by watering three times per week and you have lost 2,100 gallons of water just in that week because of one broken sprinkler head.

**Multiply that by four weeks and that's 8,400 gallons of water loss.**

Water customers are billed a base rate based on meter size (5/8-inch or 3/4-inch for residential) for the first 2,000 gallons consumed. Billing is then calculated per every 1,000 gallons by the commodity rate tier system. The more water that is used, the price per thousand gallons increases.

**Examples of usage:** This home waters 3 days a week for 12 minutes per station, 10 stations, with 5 heads per station. This does not take into account any usage from drip lines or soaker hoses that run with your sprinkler system or if your pool is being re-filled due to evaporation. Calculation based on 3/4” meter. Final dollar amounts shown are **water-use only**.

1. Example showing only sprinkler usage. This example is assuming that no other water has been used, except for the sprinklers. This calculation shows the water cost only for 4 weeks of water based on the data above.

2		24.39	\$24.39
13	X	4.16	\$54.08
10 X (10MAX)		5.19	\$51.90
11 X (15MAX)		5.54	\$60.94
0	X	6.04	\$0.00
<b>36</b>			<b>\$191.31</b>

2. Example only showing sprinkler usage. This example is assuming that no other water has been used, except for the sprinklers. This calculation shows the water cost only for 5 weeks of water based on the data above.

2		24.39	\$24.39
13	X	4.16	\$54.08
10 X (10MAX)		5.19	\$51.90
15 X (15MAX)		5.54	\$83.10
5	X	6.04	\$30.20
<b>45</b>			<b>\$243.67</b>

3. Example showing 10,000 gallons of normal household water use in addition to 4 weeks of sprinkler use.

2		24.39	\$24.39
13	X	4.16	\$54.08
10 X (10MAX)		5.19	\$51.90
15 X (15MAX)		5.54	\$83.10
6	X	6.04	\$36.24
<b>46</b>			<b>\$249.71</b>

4. Example showing 10,000 gallons of normal household water use in addition to 5 weeks of sprinkler use.

2		24.39	\$24.39
13	X	4.16	\$54.08
10 X (10MAX)		5.19	\$51.90
15 X (15MAX)		5.54	\$83.10
15	X	6.04	\$90.60
<b>55</b>			<b>\$304.07</b>