

Miscellaneous Information

Water Conservation

Check your water meter

You can read your own water meter any time. Learning to do this is easy and can help you detect leaks on your property. It is important to remember that North Gualala Water Company is only responsible for the meter and the pipes *up to your meter*—it is not responsible for any piping or connections or leaks on your property.

Steps:

- 1. Locate your meter box.** It is usually at the property boundary near the road. If you cannot find it, please call the Water Company and someone will be able to tell you where it is located.
- 2. Locate your meter.** Neighboring houses often share a meter box so there might be multiple meters in one box. You can find your meter number on your water bill—this number is stamped near the hinges on the meter lid (close the lid to see the number). Each Locate your particular meter with this number.
- 3. Read the values on the gauge.** Write down the number from the gauge (5- or 6-digits). This is your current reading. The next time you read the 5-digit number it will be different if you have used water in the meantime. A simple subtraction will give you the cubic feet of water that has passed through the meter between your gauge readings:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Tuesday's reading:} \quad 50509 \\ \text{Monday's reading:} \quad - 50492 \\ \hline \qquad \qquad \qquad 17 \text{ cubic feet of water} \end{array}$$

- 4. Check the leak detector dial.** Each meter has a small dial with a triangle that spins when water is flowing through the meter. The speed of the spinning triangle corresponds to the amount of water flowing. If you know that you are using a lot of water at the moment (e.g., the dishwasher is running and someone is taking a shower) then it should be moving quickly around. However, if there is no water being used in the house (not even the hot water heater refilling) then it should not be moving around at all. If it is moving, you might have a leak.
- 5. If you have a leak, use the leak detector dial.** Write down the meter gauge 5-digit reading. Locate the water shut off valve for your entire house/property. Often this is near a hose spigot at the front of the house. Turn it off. Confirm that it is off by turning on a sink faucet. Go back to your meter and see if the leak detector dial is moving.

If the dial is *not* moving, then there is a leak in your house.

If it *is* moving then you probably have a leak between the meter and the water shut off valve because the dial indicates that water is moving through the meter. After a few minutes, write down the 5-digit reading again and calculate the amount of water used. This can help you get an idea of the size of your leak.

Remember that the Water Company is only responsible for the meter and the pipes *up to your meter*—it is not responsible for any piping or connections or leaks on your property.

6. When you are done, close the meter box lid carefully to prevent damage to the meter.

Checking for leaks

There are a few simple ways you can check for leaks between the meter and your water shut off valve. Your eyes and ears are the best tools for finding leaks as you walk from the meter box to your water shut off valve.

- Listen for rushing water. Often, the water supply line to a house is buried underneath an asphalt or cement driveway or sidewalk. If a pipe has broken and a large amount of water is escaping then you might be able to hear it.
- Look for dampness on the ground.
 - During the dry season, if you see a large damp area of soil that has not recently been irrigated, then it is possible your leak is under that soil. Similarly, you might see dampness seeping/wicking through the asphalt or cement.
 - During the wet season or if you've recently irrigated, trying probing 4"-5" down into the soil with a rigid stick or rod. Pull the stick out of the ground and inspect the hole for pooled water, which would indicate a leak. Of course, if your water line is buried beneath a paved surface, you cannot do this type of inspection.
- If you cannot find the leak yourself, you should call a plumber. North Gualala Water Company is not able to investigate or repair leaks on customer property.