

Water Ways



Don't lose water to a leak

Automated meter-reading equipment installed in PUD water systems in 2006 brought many advantages, including the ability to detect possible leaks.



The equipment alerts the PUD if water fails to shut off for at least an hour during any 24-hour period. These alerts could indicate a leaking toilet, for example, or a faulty valve on an irrigation system.

The PUD notifies customers by mail when equipment indicates there may be a leak. If you receive a "leak letter," here are some things to do:

Check the toilet. Even if you can't hear your toilet running, there's a chance water is silently leaking from the tank into the bowl and down the drain.

1. Remove the tank lid.
2. Add some food coloring or a dye tablet to turn the water a different color. Put the tank lid back on.
3. Check the bowl after about 30 minutes. If you see colored water, you have a leak. If the water is clear, water is not leaking from the tank to the bowl.

If you do have a leak, there are a number of possible causes. If you remove the tank lid and can easily identify the cause, correct the problem and try your leak test again. Consider that "fixes" such as bending the float back to shape, or adjusting how the rubber flapper falls, often end up failing soon afterward. In most cases, you will want to replace the toilet flapper (the rubber piece at the bottom of the tank that keeps water in) and/or the filling mechanism. These are available at hardware stores and home centers for about \$8 each.

Check faucets. A leaking faucet is frequently the result of a bad rubber washer. The washer on a sink is typically located under the handle. A washer is relatively easy to replace, if you have the right tools. It does require shutting off the water under the faucet, and removing the handle. Check local home centers or the Internet (keywords "repairing leaky faucets") for instructions on how to repair faucet leaks. If you don't feel comfortable doing the repair yourself, a plumber may be your best option. Remember, even if you have to pay a plumber to fix the leak, you will save money in the long run.

Borrow a water meter monitor. The PUD can loan home monitors to customers to help them track water use. These monitors pick up a signal from the meter to give a digital readout of water consumption. This way you can track use – and detect leaks – without getting into your meter vault.

Turn off every water-using item inside and outside the home or building. Then check the monitor once an hour. If the readout has changed, you have a leak. If you suspect a toilet may be the culprit, turn the water off from the toilet shut-off valve (on the wall, under the toilet) and check the meter again.

If you still can't locate the leak, find the shut-off valve for your home. It can be indoors or outdoors, but should be near the location where the water line enters the house. If you don't know where the shut-off valve is, follow a straight line from the water meter to your home, and look for it.

Now try to confirm the location of the leak. If the main shut-off is closed and the meter has stopped, the leak is not between the meter and the house. If the

Here's what customers said after using a water monitor

"We discovered leaks in an upstairs toilet and also an irrigation valve. (We are) more aware while brushing teeth, rinsing dishes, kitchen use... Thanks for your help!"

"I think it is helpful to know how much water is used in every area of our yard."

"Our water use went from 100 gallons to 40 gallons per day..."

"I really, really appreciate the monitor being made available. I verified I don't have any exterior water leaks and I was shocked to learn how much water it took to keep my lawn almost as green as my neighbor's."

If you'd like to borrow a monitor, contact the PUD at (509) 661-8008.

continued

Fall 2007

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OF CHELAN COUNTY
**P.O. BOX 1231
WENATCHEE, WA 98807-1231**



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Water Ways

meter still runs with the main water shut off, your leak is between the meter and the house. Since outdoor leaks are relatively rare, be sure to double-check that all indoor fixtures and outdoor hose and irrigation lines are off. Call a plumber to fix underground outdoor leaks.

Source: www.savingwater.org

Water project moves ahead

Construction is scheduled to begin in November on a water system to serve the Monitor area. Eight miles of pipe will carry water from the existing PUD system in lower Sunnyslope to serve up to 263 new connections. The project is funded by \$3.8 million in grants, a \$1.9 million loan, and an \$800,000 commitment from the PUD. Customers with questions about the construction process can contact Project Engineer John Goodwill at (509) 661-4022.

Be prepared for winter weather

Before cold weather arrives, prevent freezing of water supply lines and pipes:

- Drain water from swimming pool and water sprinkler supply lines. Do not put antifreeze in these lines. Antifreeze is dangerous to people, pets, wildlife and the environment.

- Remove, drain, and store hoses used outdoors. Close inside valves supplying outdoor hose bibs. Open the outside hose bibs to allow water to drain. Keep the outside valve open so that any water remaining in the pipe can expand without causing the pipe to break.
- Check around the home for other areas where water supply lines are located and are in unheated areas. Both hot and cold water pipes in these areas should be insulated.
- Consider installing specific products made to insulate water pipes such as a “pipe sleeve” or installing UL-listed “heat tape,” “heat cable,” or similar materials. Pipes should be carefully wrapped, with ends butted tightly and joints wrapped with tape. Follow manufacturer’s recommendations for installing and using these products. Newspaper can provide some degree of insulation and protection to exposed pipes.

How to reach us

Conservation and Customer Services:..... 661-8008

Water Department: 661-4254

Web site: www.chelanpud.org/water-conservation