

# How to Read Your Water Meter

Learning how to read your water meter is a useful tool to keep track of water consumption in your home. By reading your meter at the beginning and the end of the day you can compare the two totals and determine how much water you and your family used in a single day. You can also use your water meter to check for leaks. If you turn off all water-using fixtures in your house and the meter is still turning, chances are you have a leak somewhere. You will also want to know the location of the customer shutoff valve, so that you can turn off water to the house in the event of a leak. Here are some hints to help you find and read your water meter.



## STEP 1: Locate Your Meter

In Jackson County PWSD #12, water meters are typically located in the front yard, near the curb. Outside meters are typically housed in a meter pit with a cast iron lid. Sometimes two water meters will be next to each other, on either side of the property line. Carefully remove the lid by using a tool such as a large screwdriver or pliers. Visually examine the area around the meter to make sure there are no harmful insects, such as fire ants or wasps.

Water meters for residential single-family homes are usually 5/8" or 3/4" size. It is unusual to find anything larger than a 1-inch meter on a single-family home. The size of the meter refers to the diameter of the opening where water flows through the meter. The size of the water meter is typically printed on the face of the meter, or it may be stamped into the case.

## STEP 2: Read Your Water Meter



*The small red triangle or circle to the left of the needle on the meter face is the low flow indicator. That indicator will spin if any water is flowing through the meter, so it can be useful in leak detection.*

Your water meter will have several number wheels, some with white background and some with black background. It looks very similar to a car's odometer, and in fact your water meter is read the same way: from left to right. All but the last two digits are recorded in the computer during meter-reading. Jackson County PWSD #12 calculates usage in 1000 gallons, therefore the last two digits are not shown on your bill.

### STEP 3: Calculate Your Usage

Now, calculate your water usage by taking your most recent utility bill and locating the current reading. Subtract the reading you see on your meter from the current reading on your most recent bill, and determine your consumption since the meter was read last.

#### Sample Usage from Bill:

Jackson County PWSD #12  
304 N Range Rd  
Greenwood MO 64034 816-537-6856

First Class Mail  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Greenwood MO  
Permit No. 8

Account	Due Date	Service Period
1234567	7/31/2008	05/15 06/15

Code	Current	Previous	Usage	Amount
Water	1285	1223	6,200	\$32.53
Sale Tax				\$0.33
Primacy				\$3.00

Account	Location
1234567	102 YOUR STREET

Due Date	Due Now	With Late Charge
7/31/2008	\$ 35.86	\$ 39.45

RETURN THIS PORTION WITH PAYMENT.  
Jackson County PWSD #12

WATER WISE CUSTOMER  
102 YOUR STREET  
GREENWOOD MO 64034

If you have a previous balance, service disconnection is 8/12/08.

Due Now
\$35.86

With Late Charge
\$39.45

Location: 1234567  
102 YOUR STREET

If your meter now reads 1296, subtract the current reading on your bill then multiply by 1000 to determine how much water has been used since your last meter reading.  
 $129.6 - 128.5 = 1.1 \times 1000 = 1,1000$  gallons.

### STEP 4: Locate Your Master Water Shut-Off Valve

Occasionally it may be necessary to shut off water to your home.

If you have a water leak in your home, you will need to shut off the water - *FAST!*

The easiest way to do this is to locate the customer shutoff valve, sometimes called the master valve. The customer shutoff valve is usually located where your water pipe enters your home before it splits to go to your water heater, and is there for your use to shut off the water.

Never touch any part of the meter assembly that is between the water meter and the street. This portion of the meter assembly belongs to Jackson County PWSD #12, and tampering with meters is a violation of State Law. If you cannot find your shutoff valve, or if you need assistance in shutting off water, please call our office at 816/537-6856 or the after hours emergency number at 813/223-2816.

