

# 01 READING A METER

## SIMPLE WAYS TO CHECK FOR LEAKS

Does your water bill seem high? Do you suspect a leak? Here are some ways to check your water meter for billing accuracy or water leaks:

**Where is my water meter?** It's probably in your front yard, in the grass, near the street, or in the back yard/side yard. Look for a cast iron lid on the ground with the words "water meter." Remove the lid to expose the meter, which is about 12 inches into the ground. When you finish checking the meter, replace the lid securely.

**What do the dials mean?** The large dial with the red hand shows volume in 1 – 10 gallons. If no water is being used, the leak indicator (small red triangle) should not be moving. If everything is turned off on the property and the triangle is still moving, then a leak may be possible.

**What do the numbers mean?** The first digits on the white background measure water use by 1,000 gallons and are read for billing each month. The black background digits on the right side show the one gallon, 10-gallon, and 100-gallon amounts, which carry over to the next month's billing.

**How is my meter read?** Simply read the numbers shown on the odometer (this records total water usage) from left to right to take your meter reading. Every turn of a black number measures 1,000 gallons. Every turn of a white number in the first black register measures 100 gallons. The second black register measures in 10 gallons. The "0" at the end is the place holder.

**How do I check for leaks?** Look for dripping faucets, showerheads and fixture connections. Also check for leaks in your irrigation systems and outside spigots. Tighten pipe connections and replace fixtures if necessary. To check for a toilet leak, put a few drops of food coloring in the tank and see if it appears in the toilet bowl before you have flushed.

For help to find or fix a water leak, call a plumber. If you suspect an error in your bill, send an email to Utilities Services at [Tulsa311@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:Tulsa311@cityoftulsa.org) or call 311.



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### IN THIS EDITION OF CITY LIFE

<p>01 <b>BASIC METER READING</b> ----- Learn how to read your water meter and check for possible leaks at home.</p>	<p>02 <b>FLOOD AWARENESS</b> ----- Buy flood insurance, know your risk and be prepared for possible flooding.</p>
<p>03 <b>PREVENT BACKFLOW</b> ----- Follow a few simple precautions to protect from backflow.</p>	<p>04 <b>PUBLIC WORKS WEEK</b> ----- Water, sewer, stormwater, streets, trash service keep life going in Tulsa.</p>

+ **PLUS: KEEP FATS, OIL, GREASE OUT OF SEWERS.**

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# 02 AVOID FLOODED AREAS

## MAY IS FLOOD AWARENESS MONTH

Know your risk of flooding. Where it can rain, it can flood. Everyone is at risk – even those who don't live close to rivers and creeks. Just because a property has not flooded in the past does not mean that it won't in the future. Flood risk can change over time. Visit [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov) to find out what you can do about your flood risk.

During a 30-year mortgage, homes located in high-risk flood zones have a 26 percent chance of flooding compared to a 9 percent chance of fire. Most insurance does not cover flood damage. Buy a flood insurance policy to protect your home. Renters can buy contents coverage even if the structure is not insured. Residents in the Tulsa city limits are eligible for a 45-percent discount on policies from the National Flood Insurance Program.

Spring rain can bring severe and sudden flooding. Never walk through flood waters – 6 inches of moving water can sweep you off your feet. Remember the phrase, "Turn Around; Don't Drown," and avoid driving through flooded areas, as most flood deaths occur in cars.

Flood risk still exists! Call the City of Tulsa's Customer Care Center at 311 or (918) 596-7777 to find out the flood hazards on your property and to find out ways to protect your property from flooding. City staff is available to help interpret floodplain maps, explain flood insurance and provide technical assistance.

## 03 BACKFLOW PREVENTION

### PROTECT OUR PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM

The City's Water and Sewer Department is dedicated to ensuring that the water delivered through the public water system to your home is safe to drink. However, situations outside of the City's control sometimes occur and can jeopardize the quality of your drinking water by allowing backflow into the public water system.

Backflow is the reverse flow of water from a plumbing system back into the public water system. Cross-connections are connections between the public water system and anything else that could allow the backflow of foreign materials into the system.

Backflow occurs because of backsiphoning or backpressure. Backsiphoning happens when there is a loss of pressure in the water system and something foreign is sucked back into the water supply. Backpressure occurs when the pressure in premise plumbing is greater than the pressure coming in from the water main.

Follow these simple precautions to help protect our drinking water system from backflow events:

- **Never submerge hoses in buckets, pools, tubs, sinks or other containers.**
- **Always keep hose ends clear of possible contaminants. An air gap of 2 inches or more between the hose end and the receptacle is the safest and simplest way to prevent backflow and backsiphoning.**
- **Don't tamper with the temperature and pressure valves on hot water tanks. These valves will discharge when there is thermal expansion in the tank. Install a thermal expansion tank if necessary.**
- **Buy and install inexpensive backflow-prevention devices, called atmospheric vacuum breakers, for all threaded faucets around your home. These devices are readily available at hardware stores and home improvement centers.**
- **Don't use garden hose spray attachments to apply chemicals without using a backflow prevention device at the faucet. Lawn or cleaning chemicals are toxic, and many can be fatal if ingested.**

## TRAP THE GREASE

### AVOID COSTLY HOME PLUMBING BILLS

Fats, oils, and grease aren't just bad for your arteries; they are bad for the sewers, too. When food scraps are washed down the drain, the fat and grease from the food can build up in your sewer lines, causing raw sewage to back up into homes, businesses and the environment. Anything with a fat content can contribute to grease-clogged pipes. Avoid costly home plumbing bills by following these three simple steps:

1. **TRAP** bacon grease or meat drippings in a sealable container and toss in the trash.
2. **SCRAPE** all food scraps in the compost or trash.
3. **WIPE** all greasy, oily, creamy or buttery food residues from dishes before you wash them.

\*Running hot water and soap down the drain does not prevent grease build-up and blockages.

You also can recycle your liquid cooking oils at the City's Household Pollutant Collection Facility, 4502 S. Galveston Ave. It is open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 8 to 11:30 a.m. and noon to 4:30 p.m., except for City holidays.

For more information on proper disposal of fats, oils, and grease, visit [www.TrapTheGreaseTulsa.com](http://www.TrapTheGreaseTulsa.com).

Despite all these preventive measures, if you see, hear or smell something you think might be a sewage overflow or backup, report it immediately by calling (918) 586-6999. The City of Tulsa has a customer service employee available around the clock and, if needed, a work crew is available to inspect and take action.



## 04 PUBLIC WORKS WEEK

### TULSA PARTICIPATES IN ANNUAL EVENT

Each year, Tulsa joins other cities, counties and states to celebrate National Public Works Week during the third full week of May – May 21-27 in 2023. Public Works Week challenges citizens to think about the role public works plays in creating a great place to live.

Public works professionals are always ready to serve their community with resilience to adapt and thrive in challenging situations. Public works provide many essentials for life in Tulsa all day, every day.

Tulsa residents rely on public works for clean water, dependable sewer service, stormwater drainage and flood control, collection of refuse and recycling, as well as maintained streets, traffic signals, signs and pavement markings. Tulsa public works also include engineering for infrastructure and other projects, maintenance of public buildings, snow and ice removal in winter, and grass mowing in the summer.

Observance of National Public Works week is led by the American Public Works Association (APWA). APWA first celebrated National Public Works Week in 1960. Since then, Public Works Week annually calls attention to the importance of public works in daily life: planning, building, managing and operating vital services for the community.