

Adjustment to Sanitary Sewer Charges Due To Water Leaks

Property owners should address water leaks immediately. An uncorrected leak will result in higher water and sewer use fees and in some cases could cause damage to your home or facility. As a courtesy, you may be contacted by the City's Utility Office to check your service for water leaks; with the large number of customers this does not always happen. It is the owner's responsibility to keep track of high water usage and repair water leaks promptly.

Little leaks can cost big money

Small leaks in your water system cost you monthly. Not only does high water usage affect the water portion of your bill, but it also affects wastewater (sewage) portion as well. (Wastewater rates are approximately double the cost of water usage) The figure below provides a look at how even small leaks add up over the course of a monthly billing cycle.

Size of Leak	Water Wasted Each Month
 Dripping Leak	7,920 gallons
• 1/16 trickle	58,000 gallons
• 1/8 stream	98,000 gallons
• 1/4 stream	393,666 gallons

Identifying a leak

First check all water outlets (i.e. faucets, toilets, garden hose sillcocks, etc.) inside and out of the dwelling for possible leak points. If no leak is found other places to look include hot water heater tanks and connections, boilers and washing machines. A final check should be to look at all piping and their connection points. If you have a basement this can be done quickly. Crawl spaces can be more challenging as you will need to use a flash light to trace water lines. A plumber may be required to find hard to locate leaks. If you think you may have a leak close all points of water use (faucets). Then locate your meter. On the top of the meter head is a small spinner (**See photos below**). This spinning device is the low flow indicator and will spin either quickly or very slowly depending on water use.

Low Flow Indicator



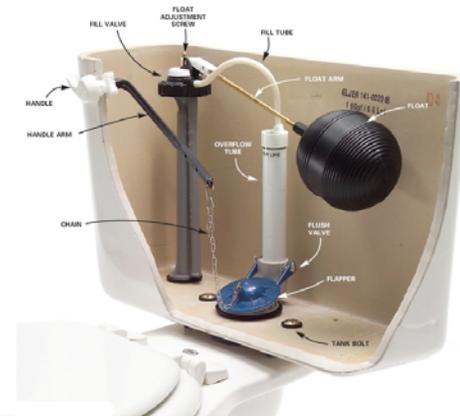
If you have all water use points closed and this spinner is still turning even very slowly you have a leak in the water system. At times this spinner can stop for several minutes and then you may see a sudden surge of usage, even though no one in dwelling appears be using water at that time. If this seems to be the case, the typical place for unknown water usage is the fill and flush mechanism for a toilet. A second point to check would be water treatment systems like a water softener, or reverse osmosis systems. Most water treatment system regenerate and backwash the reject water to the sewer system. This cleaning operation uses large amounts of water to wash the treatment system from built up contaminates. At times the valves controlling this operation can become stuck open resulting high water usage.

Toilet Leaks

All toilets have internal filling parts that ultimately fail. Poorly adjusted or worn components in a toilet will allow water to continue to flow either intermittently or continuously. Sometimes it is very hard to see or hear this type of leak. A quick and inexpensive toilet leak test can be performed by using liquid food color. Lift the cover off the toilet tank, using a brightly colored food dye like red or green (Note if you currently use a colorized block in the toilet tank you need to remove it and flush several times making sure the color is gone from the tank before adding the food color dye) add about 6 to 12 drops of the food color to the water in the tank, replace the cover but don't flush, wait about an 1/2 hour. After a 1/2 hour look in the toilet bowl, if color is present in the bowl you have a leak and repairs are necessary. A toilet leak test packet can also be obtained from the City's Utility Billing Office **FREE** of charge. Instructions for use are printed on the packet.



When it has been determined that a water leak was the result malfunctioning toilet, the City requires the installation of a **complete toilet repair kit**. (Pictured below) Some toilets use kits other than the one pictured. Partial repairs are **NOT** accepted for billing adjustments.



Request Leak Adjustment

Customers may request a leak adjustment to their monthly utility bill due to an unexpected water leak(s), by contacting the City's Utility Billing Office (219)362-3175. When a customer contacts the utility billing office about a water leak adjustment a **Water Leak Report and Inspection Form** will be generated at that time and will be submitted to the Wastewater Department. The home owner will be given up to 30 days to complete leak repairs, and contact the Wastewater Treatment Facility to schedule a site visit (219)362-2354. This visit is for the purpose of visually confirming adequate repairs have been completed. If upon inspection repairs are found to be inadequate or additional leaks need to be addressed, the inspector will reschedule a follow up site visit. Only two site visits will be allowed per leak event. The current policy allows only one (maximum two billing cycles) leak adjustment per address in a twelve month period. Water leak adjustments affect the sewer portion of the bill only.

***Customers with more than two dwellings on one water meter are not eligible for leak adjustments. However, if a multiunit building on one meter has a service leak it will be up to the discretion of the City if an adjustment will be granted.**



RESOLUTION NO. 2-2010-B

**POLICY RE: ADJUSTMENT TO SANITARY
SEWER CHARGES DUE TO WATER LEAKS**

WHEREAS, the Wastewater Department has recommended certain adjustments be allowed to the sanitary sewer charges in the event of increased bills due to water leaks.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Works of the City of LaPorte that the following policies be adopted pertaining to adjustments in the sanitary sewer charges due to water leaks.

I. Water leak(s) *NOT DISCHARGED* to sanitary sewer system

If a water leak occurs on the owner's side of a city water meter and results in water not being discharged into the sanitary sewer system, the owner may apply to the Board of Works for an adjustment on the sewer portion of the bill only. A Wastewater Department inspector must do a site visit to confirm a water leak. The owner must provide evidence that an adequate repair to the leak has been performed before requesting a wastewater leak adjustment. The owner may apply for a leak adjustment only once in a 12 month period and for the maximum period of two billing cycles. Wastewater usage adjustment will be calculated by using the owner's (prior to leak) previous six month average water usage.

II. Water leak(s) *DISCHARGED* to sanitary sewer system

If a water leak occurs on the owner's side of a city water meter and results in water being discharged into the sanitary sewer system from i.e. broken water line, toilet valve open, etc., the owner may apply to the Board of Works for an adjustment on the sewer portion of the bill only. A Wastewater Department inspector must do a site visit to confirm a water leak. The owner must provide evidence that an adequate repair to the leak has been performed before requesting a wastewater leak adjustment. The owner may apply for a leak adjustment only once in a 12 month period and for the maximum period of two billing cycles. If the adjustment is approved by the Board of Works, the sewer cost during a leak event will be assessed at the same rate as the current water rate per 1000 gallons used.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the Board of Works of the City of LaPorte on the 24th day of March, 2010.