

Reading Your Water Meter

By reading your water meter you can:

- Check your home for invisible or slow leaks,
- Track your daily usage,
- Determine how much water is used for a specific purpose, like watering the lawn,
- Avoid receiving a surprisingly high water bill.

Locating your water meter

The meter is generally located near the curb in front of your home, housed in a concrete box. Carefully remove the lid with a tool like a screwdriver and set it aside to expose the meter.

How to read a water meter

Reading a water meter is similar to reading a car odometer. The meter measures volume of water in **cubic feet**. There are two common types of meters in the service area:

- 1. Meter A and B register down to the 0.001 cubic foot, shown on the first digit on the right. The second digit on the right represents 0.010 cubic foot, the third digit represents 0.100 cubic foot, and so forth.
- One cubic foot equals **7.48 gallons** of water.

Your water bill is figured in 100 cubic foot increments, known as billing units or "CCF". Each billing unit is equal to 748 gallons.

To check for leaks

- 1. Start by firmly turning off all water using appliances and fixtures inside and outside the house.
- 2. Next, go outside and record the meter reading (all the digits).
- 3. Wait 15 minutes and check the meter reading again. If the reading is unchanged your house is water tight.

If the meter reading has moved or you see continuous consumption on the GPM (gallons per minute) screen you have a leak to hunt down.

A common cause is a leaking toilet.

Two common types of water meters in the SCMU service area:



These digits are used for billing purposes.





To track your daily usage

To find out how much water you use in a given period:

- 1. Record the meter reading using the first 6 digits starting on the left.
- Take another reading a few days or a week later. Subtract the first reading to get total usage. Multiply this number by 7.48 to convert cubic feet to gallons, as shown in example.
- 3. Divide by the number of days between readings to get your average daily use of water.

Example:										
Current reading:	0	1	3	1	5	3	7	0	8	
Prior reading:	0	1	3	0	3	2	6	0	6	
Use (cu ft.):							1	21		
						×	7.	48		
Use (gallons):						=	905			
Days:						÷	4			
Use (gallons per da	y):					=	22	26		

To find out how much water it takes to do a job - like watering the lawn or filling a pool:

- 1. Make a record of the meter reading.
- 2. Turn on the water for one minute and read the meter a second time. Subtract the first reading from the last reading to get the total cubic feet per minute.
- 3. Multiply the total cubic feet by 7.48 to calculate the flow rate.
- 4. Multiply the flow rate by the time it takes to do the job. For instance, an irrigation system running at 5 gallons per minute for 30 minutes uses 150 gallons.

To avoid a high bill

• Check your meter regularly. Use the chart to the right to log meter readings.

To get more information:

Call the Santa Cruz Municipal

Utilities at: **420-5220**

For more ways to save water, call the

Water Conservation Office at: 420-5230

Example:

The difference between the readings was **0.67 cubic feet** in one minute:

0.67 per minute× 7.48 Gallons= 5.0 gallons per minute

Date	Read	CCF used