

## MIDLAND WATER SAVVY: THE ULTIMATE LEAK DETECTION GUIDE

Helping you protect your property and your pocketbook.

At the City of Midland, we use world-class metering technology to ensure billing accuracy. However, even the best meter can't stop a leak on your property. Because our water rates are **tiered**, a small leak left alone can quickly push your bill into a higher price bracket.

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### 1. THE SILENT TOILET LEAK (The #1 Culprit)

A toilet leak isn't just a "drip" it is a constant stream of water.

- **The Loss:** A faulty flapper can lose 200 to 4,000+ gallons per day.
- **The Cost:** At Midland's higher tiers, a single running toilet can add **\$100 to \$600** to your monthly bill.
- **How to Check:** 1. Remove the tank lid and drop in 10 drops of food coloring or a dye tablet. 2. Wait 15 minutes without flushing. 3. If color appears in the bowl, your flapper is leaking.
- **The Fix:** Replace the rubber flapper. It's a \$10 DIY fix that usually pays for itself in less than 48 hours.

### 2. FAUCETS & SHOWERHEADS (Visible but Costly)

While you can see these leaks, it's easy to underestimate their volume.

- **The Loss:** A steady drip (one per second) wastes **3,000 gallons a year** . A steady stream (the size of a pencil) can waste **20+ gallons per hour** .
- **The Cost:** If you have multiple dripping faucets, you are paying for thousands of gallons that never leave the drain.
- **How to Check:** Check your **Midland Customer Portal** . If your "Minimum Hourly Flow" never hits **0.00**, you likely have a dripping faucet or a leaking shower valve.
- **The Fix:** Usually a simple washer or O-ring replacement.

### 3. OUTDOOR & IRRIGATION LEAKS (The Volume Spikes)

In our West Texas climate, irrigation is often the reason for "Sticker Shock" on a water bill.

- **The Loss:** A single broken sprinkler head can lose **10-20 gallons per minute** . If it runs for 15 minutes, 4 times a week, that's **1,200 extra gallons a month** just from one broken head.

- **The Cost:** Large outdoor leaks often push customers into the **Tier 4 rate (\$14.53 per 1,000 gallons)** .
- **How to Check:** Look for "geysers" when the system is running.
  - Watch for "mushy" or unusually green spots in your lawn.
  - Check your meter: If your meter shows a flow rate while your irrigation is supposed to be off, a valve may be open or a sprinkler head or line may be broken.
- **The Fix:** Replace broken heads immediately and ensure your controller isn't programmed for "multiple start times."

#### 4. THE SERVICE LINE LEAK (The Hidden Emergency)

This is a leak in the pipe between our meter and your house.

- **The Loss:** Since these pipes are under high pressure, they can lose **10,000+ gallons in a few days** .
- **How to Check:**
  1. Turn off the main water shut-off valve inside or at your house.
  2. Check the meter. If the **low-flow indicator** (the small red triangle on T-10s or the digital flow icon on Sonic meters) is still moving/flashing, the leak is in the ground between the meter and your home.
- **The Fix:** Contact a licensed plumber immediately. This is an urgent repair to prevent foundation damage.

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#### WHY THE "AVERAGE" NUMBERS DON'T FIT MIDLAND

You may see national averages (like the EPA's) suggesting a family of four uses 12,000 gallons a month. However, in Midland, factors like **water softeners, RO systems, and large irrigation zones** mean our usage patterns are different.

- **Water Softeners:** A softener stuck in a "backwash" cycle can waste **50-100 gallons per hour** indefinitely.
- **RO Systems:** A failing shut-off valve on an RO system can send water straight down the drain 24/7.

#### USE YOUR DATA!

Don't wait for your bill to arrive. Log in to the **Midland Customer Portal** to see your usage in near real-time. If you see blue bars on your graph at 3:00 AM, use the tips above to find the leak today!

**Questions?** Contact City Utility Billing at (432) 685-7320 or visit us at Centerpointe Plaza or City Hall.