Fort Wayne
City Utilities

High Utility Bill Investigation Checklist

Customers of Fort Wayne City Utilities may occasionally receive bills that are higher than normal. Having an unusually high bill may indicate that there is a plumbing issue in your home or business or that there is a problem with your meter reading. Sometimes a high bill may simply reflect an increase in water usage as the result of watering the lawn or garden, filling a swimming pool, having students home from college or having guests in the house.

This checklist is used by City Utilities when we investigate a concern about a high bill. You can use the questions on this checklist to determine if there may be a legitimate reason for a higher than usual bill, or if there are reasons to suspect a metering, billing or plumbing issue. If, after using the checklist, you believe there may be problem with your water meter, please contact Fort Wayne City Utilities Customer Relations Department at (260) 427-1234.

If you feel you have a plumbing problem or a water leak that is causing the high bill, you may want to contact a plumber of your choice to investigate and make any needed repairs.

ACCOUNT INFORMATION (Please have this information available if you call City Utilities)	
Name/Company name	
Address	
Telephone number	
Email Address	
Rent/Own	
Number of people in house	
Account Number	
Customer Number	

CHECKLIST		
		To begin investigating why your bill may be high, please read your water meter and compare the current reading with the latest reading shown on your most recent bill from City Utilities. If the current reading is lower than the last reading on your bill, please call City Utilities Customer Relations at (260) 427-1234.
		If the reading on the meter is higher than the reading shown on your most recent bill this is to be expected. Please continue with the checklist.
Yes	No	
☐	☐	Make sure all of the water faucets and water using appliances in your house or business are shut off. Now look at the water meter. Is anything spinning on it? A spinning dial indicates water is going through the meter. If the dial is spinning even when you have all of the water turned off, you probably have a plumbing leak somewhere that is causing your water bill to be high. The questions below may help you identify where a leak is happening.

☐	☐	Are any of your faucets or outside spigots dripping?
☐	☐	Does your water service feed any external buildings or water using systems (such as an irrigation system)?
☐	☐	Have you had any pipes replaced?
☐	☐	Do you use one toilet more than another?
☐	☐	Have you had any toilets repaired/replaced recently?
☐	☐	Have you conducted any dye tests on all your toilets? (See below for instructions on how to use dye to check toilets for leaks.)
☐	☐	Have you had any sinks repaired/replaced recently?
☐	☐	Have you had any tubs/showers repaired/replaced recently?
☐	☐	Have you had any faucets (outside/inside) repaired/replaced recently?
☐	☐	Do you have a water softener? If so, answer next question, if not skip over next question.
☐	☐	Have you checked the cycle time of the water softener? Sometimes a softener will get stuck in the backwash or rinse mode. If water continues to go down the drain after the water softener regenerates it is leaking and needs to be fixed. You may also want to turn the softener off for a month and see if it makes a difference in your water bill.
☐	☐	Have you had any repairs to the water softener or replaced it?
☐	☐	Do you have an ice machine? If so, answer next question, if not skip over next question.
☐	☐	Have you had any repairs to the ice machine or replaced it?
☐	☐	Do you believe that any of the above are currently leaking?
☐	☐	Do you have a humidifier on your furnace? Inspect the float in the humidifier to make sure it not filling higher than the level recommended by the manufacturer.
☐	☐	Do you have hot water heat or boiler heat or water cooled air conditioning? Malfunctioning units may contribute to higher bills.
☐	☐	Do you have a pool and /or hot tub? If so, answer next question, if not skip over next question.
☐	☐	Has the pool/hot tub been filled recently or has water been added?
☐	☐	Do you have a sump pump? If so, answer next question, if not skip over next 2 questions.
☐	☐	Is it electric with a water back up system?
☐	☐	Does the water back up system run off city water?
☐	☐	Have you had a dishwasher repaired/replaced recently?
☐	☐	Have you had a washing machine repaired/replaced recently?
☐	☐	Did you have guests or extra people in your home or did you have additional employees in your business during your last bill cycle?
		Additional observations:

For any question on the checklist where you have answered yes, you may want to investigate further. Actual usage (such as filling a hot tub or pool or having guests) can cause your water bill to be higher than usual. Leaks may also cause the bill to be higher than you think it should be. Water lost because of leaks is considered by City Utilities to have been used by you because it has gone through your water meter. You will be charged for the water that may have leaked away.

<u>Dye Testing Your Toilet for Leaks</u>
Toilet leaks are a very common cause of high water bills. Many times you can't hear the toilet running or leaking. Here's a simple way to check for a toilet leak:
1. Take the top off the toilet tank. Remove any cleaning agents that might cause the water in the toilet bowl to be colored.
2. Drop a few drops of household food coloring into the tank to dye the water. You could also use a colored drink mix (Kool-Aid or similar) or instant coffee.
3. Wait about 10 minutes. Do not flush the toilet or let anyone use it during this time.
4. Check the color of the water in the toilet bowl. If the color of the dye from the tank appears in the bowl, you have a leak.
5. If your toilet is leaking you will probably need to replace some parts inside the tank.