

Joint Water Commission



Meet Your Water Meter

www.jwcwater.org

Serving the Cities of Hillsboro, Forest Grove, Beaverton, Tigard and Tualatin Valley Water District

Finding Your Water Meter

Your water meter should be located in front of your house, near the street, and inside a meter box that is set flush to the ground.

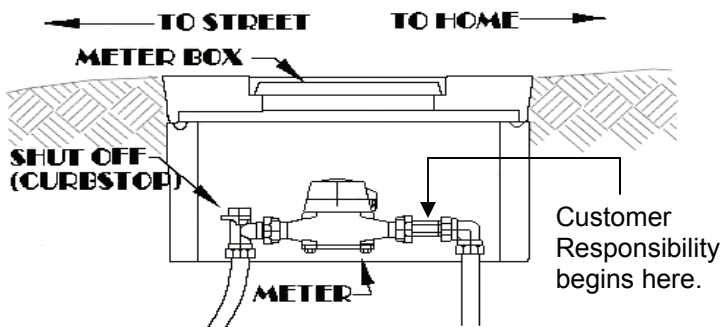
If your home is on a corner lot, your water meter could be located either on the front or side street.

Sometimes, meter boxes are not easily visible, due to landscaping and other obstructions.

If you are installing new landscaping, keep plants three feet from the meter box. Little plants become big plants in a few years — roots can damage your house service line and foliage can obstruct visibility.

If you need help locating your meter, call your local water provider.

Generally, we have the information on file— if not, we will come locate the meter for you.



The illustration above is of a typical residential meter. (If you break the shut off you will be billed for repairs, so it is better to call the Water Department for shut-offs.)

Checking For Leaks

If you think you have a water leak, check with this simple test. First, turn off all faucets and water-using appliances such as dish and clothes washers. Then, go to your water meter and lift the cover for the meter dial. Note the position of the sweep-hand, or mark the lens cover.

Wait 20-30 minutes and re-check the meter. If the sweep-hand has moved, you probably have a leak.



Newer meters have a small orange-colored triangle called a “tattle-tale.” If all water-using devices in your home are off and the tattle tale is moving, you have a leak. To determine if the leak is in the house or on the service line into the house, turn off the master shut-off for the home if you have one. (See the article to the right for how to find it.) If, after turning off the master shut-off, the tattle-tale continues to spin, the leak is in the service line - somewhere between the meter and the shut-off. If it stops, the leak is in the house.

Where to look for leaks:

- ◆ Your toilet may have a silent leak. Drop a little food coloring in the tank. Wait about 10 minutes without flushing. If color appears in the bowl, you have a leak.
- ◆ Check for moist spots around and under house plumbing and around the outdoor plumbing.
- ◆ Washers in faucets and showerheads leak when worn. They are easy and cheap to replace!

Need To Turn Your Water Off In A Hurry?

Locate your home’s shut off valve before an emergency strikes.

There’s always a shut-off valve at the water meter, but there may also be one closer to the house.

Some common places to look for your master shut off valve are:

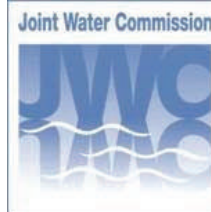
- ◆ In the crawl space or basement where the water line enters the house.
- ◆ In the garage where the water line enters the wall or ceiling, near the water heater or washer hookup.
- ◆ Outside, near the foundation of your home, possibly protected by a concrete pipe ring.

If you don’t find a hand operated master shut off valve, you should have one installed on the house side of the meter. It may come in handy, especially in an emergency.

If your water must be turned off at the meter, please call your local water provider for assistance.

Emergency Information

Post these numbers near the phone ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕



Joint Water Commission

(503) 615-6702

After hours emergency dispatch:

(503) 629-0111

COLD WATER PREPAREDNESS

Before Freezing Weather

- * Disconnect hoses from outside faucets and drain hoses.
- * Turn off and drain irrigation systems and backflow device.
- * Wrap outside faucets with insulation or newspaper.
- * Cover foundation vents with Styrofoam blocks
- * Insulate hot and cold pipes in unheated areas of the house, such as the garage or attic.
- * Show household members where the main shut off is located in case of emergency.

During Freezing Weather

- * Open cupboard doors under sinks, especially where plumbing is in outside walls, to let interior heat warm the pipes.
- * Temporarily, keep a steady drip of cold water at an inside faucet farthest from the meter. This keeps water moving, making it less likely to freeze.
- * If you are going away, leave your thermostat on at least 55 degrees; shut off water to the house; open faucets to drain pipes; flush the toilet once to drain the tank, but not the bowl.

If Pipes Do Freeze . . .

**DO NOT USE AN OPEN FLAME
OR AN ARC WELDER
TO THAW YOUR PIPES !**

- * **NEVER** thaw a frozen pipe with an open flame. You may start a fire and your pipes will burst! Use hot air from a hair dryer, the exhaust from a vacuum cleaner, or closely monitored heaters.
- * If your lines are frozen, assume they might be broken or split at some point. Purchase leak clamps at a hardware or plumbing store.
- * **Be ready to shut off your water in a hurry when the line thaws!**
- * If there is no water at all to your home, the problem may be at the street. If the water service is frozen at the meter or the service to the water main, it is the Water Department's responsibility. (Call one of the numbers listed at the top of this page.)
- * **IF YOUR PIPES BREAK . . . shut off the water at the shut-off valve and turn off the circuit breaker or gas to the water heater.**

Emergency Water Sources

If water service is interrupted for a long time, such as in an earthquake, where can you get drinking water? You should keep an emergency three-day water supply for all household members, including pets, on hand, but if you find yourself in a situation without an emergency supply, here are some other water source options:

- ◆ **Use the water in your water heater.** Be sure to turn off electricity or gas before draining tank. **You should strap your tank securely to the floor or wall NOW so it doesn't tip over during an earthquake.**
- ◆ **Use ice cubes.**
- ◆ **Use interior plumbing.** Shut off the main valve at the meter or house to trap water in the pipes. Drain water from the lowest faucet.
- ◆ **Your toilet tank** (not the bowl) is a good source if the water is cleaner free.

To purify water before drinking:

Bring water to a full boil for three minutes. **Or**
Use iodine or chlorine (liquid bleach containing 5.25% hypochlorite.) With a clean eyedropper, add four drops of bleach or six drops of iodine per quart of water. Mix and let stand for 30 minutes.