

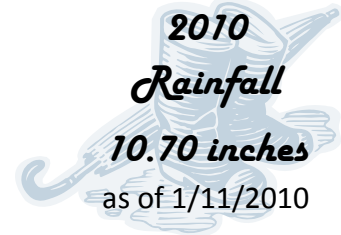


Water Watch

www.amwc.us

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Start the New Year by Understanding Your Water Use



Do you ever wonder how much water you should or should not be using?

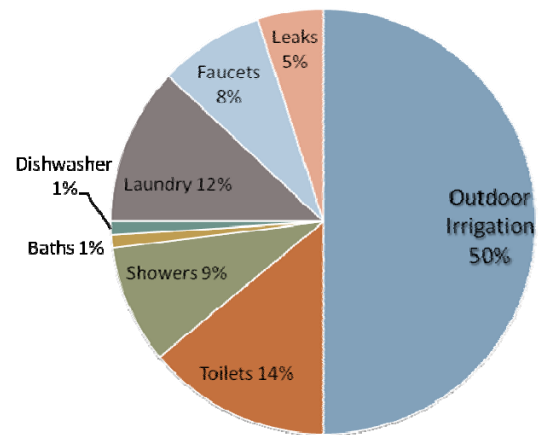
How do I rank?

The table below shows AMWC's single-family customers water use by the 50th and 80th percentile monthly use. In other words, 50% of AMWC's customers use less than 5,000 gallons in March, and 80% use less than 39,000 gallons in March. March and August are used since these months typically have the lowest and highest usage.

Atascadero Single-Family Monthly Water Use - Percentile Ranking

March		August	
50%	5,000 gallons	50%	18,000 gallons
80%	10,000 gallons	80%	39,000 gallons

California Residential Water Use



Can I estimate my water bill?

You can easily estimate if your water bill should be increasing or decreasing depending on the time of the year.

1. Know your base use

Your water bill and water use should reflect a bell curve, with the winter months of December through March being your lowest use months or base.

2. When your bill should be increasing

Depending on the size and type of your landscape your use should gradually increase each month (after the rains have stopped) as the temperature increases into July.

3. When your bill should be decreasing

Beginning in mid-August you can begin to turn down your landscape irrigation, while temperatures may remain in the 90's day length the cooler evenings and mornings reduce stress on plants. From September your bill should quickly decrease back to your typical winter usage by December.

4. Monitor & Investigate

If you receive a water bill and your water use is 40% greater than the previous year's use for that same billing period you should investigate. Begin by identifying changes or irregular water use in the last month. Take a quick check of your water meter by following the directions on the reverse page. Check for dripping faucets/spigots indoors and out. Make sure your irrigation controller is programmed correctly, during a power outage controllers with volatile memories can both lose their set program and have the watering time effected if the backup battery has died. Observe your sprinkler and drip systems while they are running for breaks or leaks.

Put a Stop to Indoor Water Waste!



Start with a quick check of your water meter.

To read your meter, remove the lid and flip up the cap that covers the meter face, and proceed as follows:

Turn off all water inside and outside your home, making sure no water will be used.

Observe if the meter's leak detector (the small triangle located on the face of the meter). If the leak detector is moving, water is being pulled through the meter. The faster the leak detector turns, the larger the volume of water passing through the meter.

To determine if a leak is inside or outside the house, shut off the main valve to the house (usually located at the front of the house underneath the faucet). Repeat the above. If there is no change to the meter this time, begin inspecting your landscape for soggy spots.

14% Toilets: Toilets are the single largest user of water indoors. Drop a dye tablet or several drops of ordinary food coloring into the toilet tank.(AMWC has free dye tabs for you). Wait a few minutes. If color shows up in the toilet bowl, you probably have a flapper leak. You will need to replace or adjust the flapper to correct this problem. If your toilet is "running in the night" pick up a Practical Plumbing Handbook from AMWC to conduct a more thorough toilet inspection.

12% Laundry: Always wash full loads or adjust the water level to match the load. If you are purchasing a new washer, consider purchasing a High Efficiency Washer (HEW). AMWC offers a \$150 rebate on qualified HEW's.

9% Showers: Practice taking a 5 to 8-minute shower, an 8-minute shower uses 20 gallons with a 2.5 gallon-per-minute shower head. If you have a shower abuser, stop by AMWC and pick up a free Shower Coach.

8% Faucets: Dripping faucets usually just need new washers. Remember to turn the water off while washing hands and brushing teeth. Avoid using the disposal and compost food waster or scrape it into the trash.

5% Leaks: Leaks waste a tremendous amount of water and can develop into more serious plumbing problems. Sixty drops per minute from a leaky faucet easily adds up to 192 gallons a month.



Other water uses to inspect include:

- **Dishwashers**
- **Ice Machines**
- **Reverse Osmosis**
A 'RO' system can account for 7-8% of inside water use.
- **Water Softeners**
- **Water Heaters**
- **Solar Hot Water Systems**
- **Pools & Spas**
Use a pool cover to save water and energy.