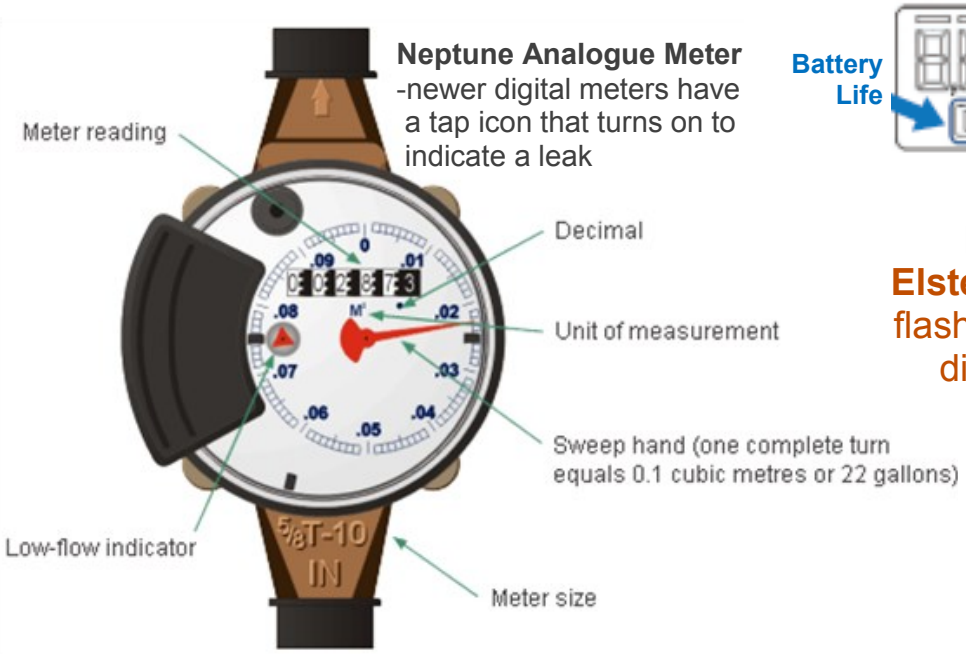
How to Read Your Water Meter

REGIONAL DISTRICT NORTH OKANAGAN

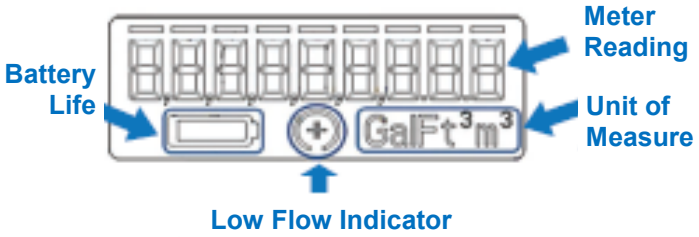
A water meter measures water flow into a home or business. The meter is usually in the basement or crawlspace of a home. A wire connects the meter to an automatic reading box (on an outside wall of the building) which is used to read the meter without entering the building.

The household water meter has a counter, like an odometer in a car, that shows how many cubic meters ($1m^3$=1000 litres) of water have gone through the meter. Most older meters have a low flow indicator—either a small red triangle or circle. When the indicator spins, water is flowing. Newer digital meters will show small water flows as the far right reading numbers change. Some also have an icon such as a dripping faucet or flashing plus sign.

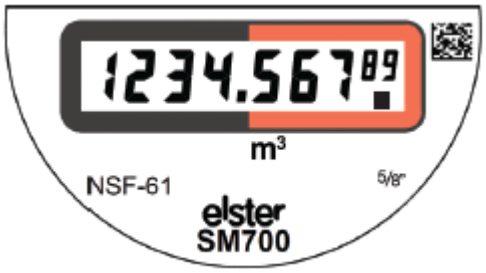
3 Meters Types: Neptune, SENSUS, Elster/Honeywell



SENSUS meters indicate leaks with a flashing plus (+) sign:



Elster meters indicate leaks with a flashing black box under the last two digits (89 in the display below):



Use Your Meter to Check for Leaks:

Make sure everything that uses water is turned off, including:

- All taps and faucets
- Toilets are not flushed
- Dishwasher and washing machine
- Outdoor hoses and automatic irrigation
- Automatic humidifiers
- Automatic ice machines
- Automatic drinking water filters

Watch the meter for two minutes.

If it moves, either something is still using water or there is a leak.

Fixing Household Leaks

The RDNO recommends contacting a licensed plumber but some minor leaks can be addressed with a few simple adjustments.

Toilets

Toilets can cause big water leaks. Clogged, worn, or misaligned parts can cause water to constantly run. Your toilet could be wasting 20-40 liters per hour!

To check for a toilet leak:
Carefully remove the toilet tank lid. Place a few drops of food coloring in the tank. After 15 minutes, check the toilet bowl. If the water is dyed, you've got a leak.

Repair suggestions:
1. Flapper isn't seating properly or it is sticking open. Most flappers eventually become misshapen and should be replaced every 5 years. **Tip:** Bring the old flapper to the hardware store to make sure you buy a new flapper that fits your toilet model.

2. Newer toilets have a Tank Fill Valve—this can get clogged by small particles common with hard water. Look for instructions specific to your model to clear clogs under the valve cap.

3. Water-filled float arm ball. Unscrew it from the arm and replace it with another ball.

4. Adjust Float Arm: Gently bend the arm down and away from the tank wall to see if water flow stops after flushing. Check to see if the chain can be adjusted before you change out the arm.

Faucets

Old and worn faucet washers and gaskets frequently cause leaks and should be replaced. **Tip:** Don't forget to turn off the water line before you start!

Showerheads

Ensure there is a tight connection between the showerhead and the pipe stem. Unscrew the head and wrap the pipe threads with pipe tape (Teflon tape) and check if the washer or "o" ring inside the showerhead needs replacing.

Outdoor Irrigation

Winterize irrigation to prevent damage by frost or freezing. Hire an irrigation professional to inspect if you suspect a leak. Look for professionals certified by the Irrigation Association of B.C. Replace the hose washer if the tap is dripping and ensure a tight connection to the tap using Teflon tape and a wrench.

Did you Know? Even small water leaks can add up to a lot of wasted water:

Water wasted per Quarter at 60 psi water pressure				
Diameter of stream		**Gallons**	**Cubic Meters**	**Litres**
	1/4”	1,181,500	4,475	4,475,000
	3/16”	666,000	2,521	2,521,000
	1/8”	296,000	1,120	1,120,000
	1/16”	74,000	280	280,000
Visit www.rdno.ca/waterwise for more water saving tips				