



## Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

Your Residential Utility Consumer Advocate

# CONSUMERS' FACT SHEET

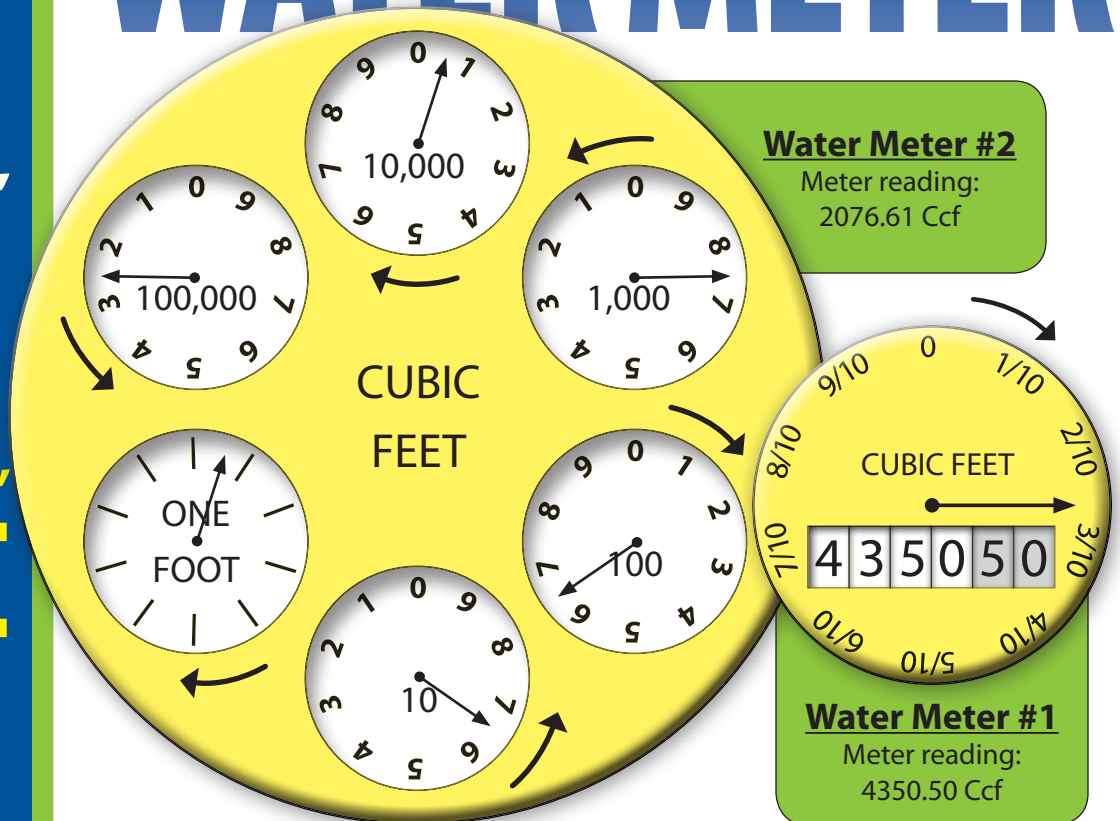
### Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

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# How to Read a WATER METER



Learning to read a water meter can help consumers discover water leaks, monitor usage and double check the charges on utility bills. All three of these activities may save consumers money in the long run.

Water meters are typically located in a basement, in a concrete box along the front curb, or along an outside wall to your house.

The meters record water usage in units of hundreds of cubic feet (Ccf) or gallons. There are two types of water meters in use today.

### Water Meter #1

Water Meter #1 includes a set of rotating numbers like the odometer on a car and also a pointer hand that revolves around the dial of the meter. As the pointer hand completes one rotation it records one (1) cubic foot (or 7.48 gallons)

of water on the far right of the set of rotating numbers. The second, third and fourth numbers from the right record ten cubic feet (Cf), 100 Cf and 1,000 Cf respectively. The two remaining numbers to the far left equal 10,000 Cf and 100,000 Cf. In the example, the meter reading shown reads 435050.2 Cf as the pointer hand is indicating that two-tenths (2/10ths) of a cubic foot of water has been used.

### Water Meter #2

Water Meter #2 looks like a series of small clocks that alternate turning clockwise and counterclockwise. The dials can be read starting with the highest numbered dial which is 100,000 cubic feet in this example. Start with the pointer on the highest numbered dial. If it is between two numbers, write down the lower number. In the example, this would be "2" on the dial labeled 100,000. The meter reading our example is 207,660 cubic feet.

## How to Read a WATER METER

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The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, represents the interests of 4.5 million households in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts.

The state agency also educates consumers about electric, natural gas, telephone and water issues.

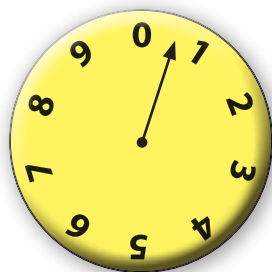
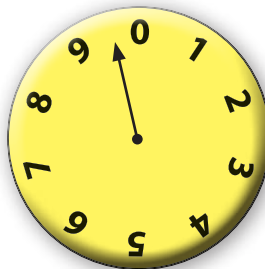
For more information, please visit the OCC website at [www.pickocc.org](http://www.pickocc.org).



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Determining the number may seem tricky when the pointer is between the zero and the nine. In that case, the zero is actually a ten, so nine would be the lower number to choose. If the pointer is in between the zero and the one, the chosen number would be zero because zero is less than one.

This meter dial would read "9" because nine is less than 10 (zero represents 10 in this case because of the location of the arrow between the nine and the 10.)



Likewise, this meter dial would read "0" because zero is less than one.

### Calculating monthly usage

To determine monthly water usage, write down the meter reading today and take another reading in exactly one month. Subtract the old reading from the new reading and you will have the number of water units used during the previous month. Consumers also can check their water usage for one day by taking a reading today and then again tomorrow. Subtract the first reading from the second and you will have the amount of water used in one day.

### Locating leaks

Knowing how to read your meter gives consumers the power to determine if there is a money-wasting leak in the home. Use these steps to find out if there is a leak:

- ▶ First, turn off all water inside and outside the home.
- ▶ Then, read the meter. Depending on which kind of meter is installed, mark where the smallest numbered dial points or what the last digit indicates.

- ▶ Wait 15 to 20 minutes and then read the meter again.
- ▶ If the hand or digit has moved, there is a leak in the house.

### Monitoring household appliances

To find out how much water (and money) is required to run a dishwasher, shower or washing machine, do the following:

- ▶ First, turn off all water inside and outside the house.
- ▶ Take a water meter reading.
- ▶ Then, turn on the appliance to be monitored.
- ▶ When the appliance has shut off, take another reading.
- ▶ Subtract the old from the new reading to discover how much water was used.
- ▶ Multiply this usage by the volumetric rate, obtained from the most current water bill or from the water company, to determine the cost to run the appliance.

### Converting Ccf into gallons

- ▶ 748.1 gallons = 1 Ccf
- ▶ Multiply the number of Ccf by 748.1 gallons to get the number of gallons used.
- ▶ *Sample:* 12 ccf x 748.1 gallons = 8,977.2 gallons
- ▶ To convert gallons into Ccf multiply the number of gallons by 0.001337.