

# OUTDOOR LEAKS



## Did you know?

Most homeowners in Greeley who experience leaks can find leaks themselves following this checklist. In just 30 minutes, you can track most down leaks. Most outdoor leaks occur at the backflow preventer or valves and may be repaired by a handy homeowner. If you are uncomfortable conducting the repairs yourself, contact a landscape professional. So, gather your tools and take this challenge to chase down any leaks.

Tools:

Gloves • Wrench • Screwdriver • Shovel • Pen/paper

## FIND AND FIX OUTDOOR LEAKS

A sudden spike in your water bill is a classic sign of a potential water leak, which can lead to higher water bills and costly damage to your property. First, register for WaterSmart at [greeley.watersmart.com](http://greeley.watersmart.com). Here, you can track water use trends, sign-up for leak alerts via e-mail or text, and access leak tutorials. Water use details available in WaterSmart will vary by meter type. Older water meters will show monthly uses, and newer meters will allow you to see hourly water use.

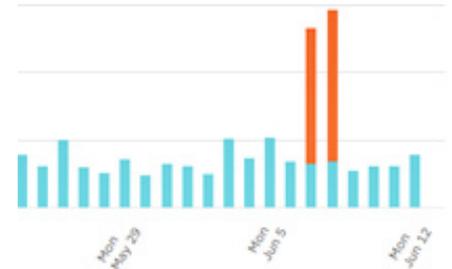
### Start by gathering clues.

#### 1. Understand your water bill.

Greeley uses a water budget to help customers know if they are using too much water. The outside portion of your water budget is based on weather and the size of your property that could be landscaped. If you don't get a paper water bill, you can access yours in your WaterSmart portal.

#### 2. Review your water use.

New water meter owners can easily monitor their water use at [greeley.watersmart.com](http://greeley.watersmart.com). These meters are tied to WaterSmart technology to detect leaks within 72 hours, and registered users receive an automated e-mail or text message alert. *A leak detected by WaterSmart will be displayed in orange as shown to the right.*

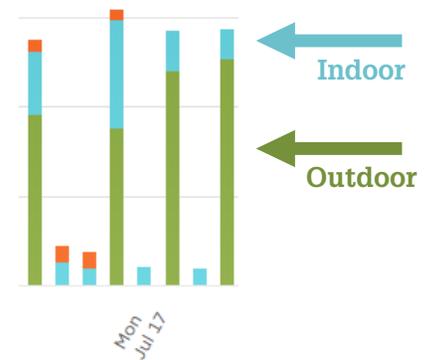


**\*\* LEAK ALERT \*\* POTENTIAL LEAK HAS BEEN DETECTED PLEASE MAKE ANY NECESSARY REPAIRS.**

#### 3. Leak Alerts.

Leak alerts are also noted on the message section of your water bill or may be identified on WaterSmart as a dramatic increase in usage over the previous month.

**Isolate the irrigation system.** Turn off the irrigation system at the backflow preventer or irrigation shut off valve for at least 24 hours. For older metered homes, if a wet spot had previously been detected, look to see if the wet spot dried out during that time. If so, then the irrigation system is the source of the leak. For new water meters, check back into your WaterSmart portal after 24 hours. If the leak stopped while your irrigation system was off, this is the source of your leak. If the leak continues, the leak is inside, and you should follow the detection steps for an indoor leak.



**Do not enter your meter pit as it is easy to damage wires or instruments.**

### Online Resources

[Greeley.WaterSmart.com](http://Greeley.WaterSmart.com)

[Epa.gov/watersmart](http://Epa.gov/watersmart)

[Greeleygov.com/conserv](http://Greeleygov.com/conserv)

### Contact

[conserve@greeley.com](mailto:conserve@greeley.com)

# CHECKLIST FOR CHASING DOWN LEAKS

## Here are some places leaks may be hiding in your yard.

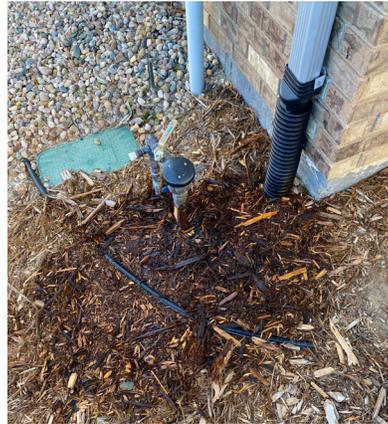
Locating continuous outdoor leaks can be difficult especially if the leak drains underground without surfacing. Most outdoor leaks are from where there are pipe fittings and connections such as valves, joints and backflow preventers. To pinpoint the source effectively, keep the irrigation system on while investigating, then turn off the irrigation system before conducting any repairs.

### Inspect the Great Outdoors:

- Walk around the yard and landscape beds to look for and feel any wet or soggy spots.
  - Areas where the grass behaves like a waterbed due to trapped water underneath is an indicator of a high-volume leak.
- Observe the location of any wet areas compared to the slope and drainage of the yard. Leaks on slopes will be uphill from the wet area.
- Check any landscaping water features (hot tubs, pools, fountains, etc.) for stuck fill valves and overflow.
- Ensure that all outdoor spigots are closed completely and not dripping water.

### Backflow Preventer:

- Find your backflow preventer which can be found near the building/house or in a landscaped area.
- Check for drips at the backflow preventer and inspect surrounding ground for any wet spots.
- Feel around fittings and valves for any water. Fittings and valves can leak and stream water directly down the side of the pipe and drain underground.
- Older backflows use copper and brass fittings. Even if there are currently no leaks, this can be a cause for future concerns.



### Valves & Valve Boxes:

- Find your valve boxes by looking for a green lid. Once you locate it:
  - Open each valve box using a screw driver, check for standing water or wet soil.
  - If there is standing water, this indicates a leaking valve or cracked fitting.
- Turn off the backflow for 24 hours to see if the valve box dries up or the water recedes.
  - After 24 hours, turn on the irrigation system and go to the suspected valve box. Look for any drips or streams at the valve and fittings.



### Sprinkler Heads:

- Sprinkler heads should dry out between irrigation cycles. Look for any heads slowly seeping water, as this may indicate a stuck-open valve.
  - After the zone finishes watering, it is essential to wait to check for any weeping heads to allow the zone to drain.
  - Check the valve for each zone and listen for any hissing water.

### Other Areas of Concern:

- Turn on each zone and inspect the landscape for bubbling water, raised turf, or excessive pooling around heads.
  - Bubbling water could indicate a break between the valve and sprinkler heads.

