

Common Questions and Statistics for Potable Water

Q: How did you determine my water use?

A: Each month a water department technician reads your water meter. The meter is read in cubic feet and then is multiplied by 7.48 to determine number of gallons used. The number of gallons is divided by 1,000 and multiplied by \$4.75. This gives the amount you owe.

C: There is no way I used this much water. The meter must be wrong.

A: Water meters operate based on fairly simple, well developed technology and are very reliable. The [America Water Works Association \(AWWA\)](#) recommends retesting meters every 10 to 15 years because they are proven to be sturdy and reliable. Every meter at Stanford was tested and certified upon installation according to (AWWA) specifications. However, we will be happy to come out and test your meter if you are still concerned. Water meters actually run slower with age, not faster. This means they measure less water, not more.

Q: Why is there so much variation in the amount of water used each month?

A: Water use is seasonal. Typically we see much higher use in the summer months and lower use in the cooler winter months when irrigation needs are not as great. Water use tends to be low during the rainy season and wet months because less irrigation is needed. Other events that may explain erratic swings in water use:

Highs

- Filling the swimming pool
- Gardening or landscaping
- Change in Landscaping (less drought tolerant)
- Heavy irrigation due to hot, dry weather
- House guests
- Car washing
- Exterior home repairs requiring water for clean-up
- Change in household routine
- Change of tenant
- Leaving a hose or faucet turned on
- Using toys that connect to a hose
- Leaks inside or outside the home.

Lows

- A rainy month, cooler temperature
- Change in Landscaping (more drought tolerant)
- Change in household routine
- Change in number of persons in household
- Vacation or sabbatical

For any other questions or concerns about you billing statement please call (650) 723-4221

Water Statistics About the Potable Water Distribution System

The average annual potable water use on campus is about 843 million gallons of water. This number translates into 2,587 acre-feet of water per year. One acre-foot covers one acre (approximately the size of a football field) one foot deep. To put these numbers into perspective the water use for an average home is about 1/2 acre-foot per year.

Water is delivered throughout the Stanford campus via 75 miles of potable water mains and services ranging in size from 1" to 24".

Since 1987, 1,300 meters have been installed on buildings, irrigation services, and main lines to measure water consumption.

The potable water supply is protected from contamination by a series of check valves and backflow prevention devices located throughout the system. At this time there are approximately 450 backflow prevention devices installed and tested on buildings and irrigation lines.

409 domestic water fire hydrants are located across the Stanford campus.