

# La Mesa Water Cooperative

## WaterGram - September 2011

### Cost of Common Water Leaks

Leaks and malfunctioning equipment may lose large amounts of water. In addition to wasting a crucial resource, these losses may have a substantial impact on monthly water bills. Because the Board recognizes that large water losses (and associated charges) may occur through no fault of the homeowner, it has adopted a Leak Policy that offers limited financial relief to homeowners with large accidental water losses. This policy can be found at

[http://lamesawatercoop.org/misc\\_files/LM\\_Leak\\_Policy\\_2011.pdf](http://lamesawatercoop.org/misc_files/LM_Leak_Policy_2011.pdf)

This year the Board has received a large number of requests for financial relief under our Leak Policy. These requests represent a substantial waste of water and a loss of income to the Coop. Because we are a cooperative, ultimately all members share the cost of wasted water.

Below is list of common leaks and their approximate impact on the average monthly bill for January, a low use month, and July, a peak use month. (Average household use is 4650 gallons in January and 11,770 gallons in July.)

How Common Leaks Increase Average Water Bills For January and July*					
Source	GPM	Frequency	Gals/month	January	July
Faucet drip-slow	.01	continuous	432	\$0.38	\$0.76
Irrigation 1/4" drip line open	1	3 hours/wk	780	\$0.80	\$1.37
Faucet drip-moderate	.10	continuous	4,320	\$5.23	\$9.13
Toilet running	.10	continuous	4,320	\$5.23	\$9.13
Irrigation distribution line open	10	3 hours/wk	7,800	\$10.30	\$88.50
Water softener excess flushing	10	30 min/ day	9,000	\$12.40	\$124.50
Swamp cooler overflow	0.5	continuous	21,600	403.06	\$749.90
Hose bib open	10	1 week	100,800	\$4,363.01	\$4,709.90

\* Concept and original table by Jock Embry with modifications suggested by former LMWC President George Bailey

As the table shows, even a faucet slowly dripping or a single open drip irrigation line has some effect on monthly bills, but water losses because of broken irrigation distribution lines and malfunctioning water softeners or swamp coolers have very large effects.

**Water losses are particularly expensive during the high usage summer months.**

During the summer sudden increases of several thousand gallons above average seasonal usage is most often caused by irrigation leaks or malfunctioning irrigation systems. Although common sense suggests that a leak of

10,000 gallons should make a very large puddle, this is often not the case. With the soil found in most areas served by LMWC even a leak of this magnitude may show little, if any, surface water. This is particularly true if the source of the leak is buried or obscured by landscaping.

**Regular inspection of irrigation systems can prevent many water losses.**

It is possible that what appears to be a leak may be the result of a malfunctioning or mis-read water meter. If you question the accuracy of the meter reading, please call Hilde at 867-3335 to arrange for another reading.

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