

# 2012 DECEMBER



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### PREVENT FREEZING PIPES - KEEP YOUR HEAT ON WHEN YOU'RE AWAY

In addition to winterizing your entire home, remember to keep your thermostat at a reasonable temperature – 55 to 58 degrees – when away on vacations this holiday season, to help prevent pipes in your home from bursting. Leave your cupboard doors open where you have pipes on outside facing walls to help keep them heated.

For more on winterizing your home, please visit [www.tmwa.com/winterize](http://www.tmwa.com/winterize).



### RESPONSIBLE WATER USE DURING WINTER MONTHS

Using water responsibly is just as important in the cold weather months as it is during the summer. In addition to taking shorter showers and turning the faucet off while washing dishes or brushing your teeth, one of the most important ways you can use water responsibly is to keep an eye on your monthly water bill for any suspicious spikes. In the wintertime, the average family of four uses 6,000 gallons a month or less. You can monitor your bill each month to know what your family uses – it should be consistent (within one or two thousand gallons) during the months your irrigation system is turned off. If you see a spike in your water bill during the colder months, you may have a leak. Please see the reverse side of this newsletter for an overview on how to detect and repair a leak.

Most problems, such as a stuck toilet flapper or irrigation valve, occur when customers are away from home and there is no one around to notice. If you are leaving your home for several days or weeks during winter, consider turning your toilets off at the wall so they can't inadvertently use water while you are away. As always, the best thing you can do each month is review your bill to check your usage.

Please visit [www.tmwa.com/bill](http://www.tmwa.com/bill) for more on understanding your water bill. Know what to expect each month and call **834-8080, option 2**, if you see anything unusual.

### HOW TMWA ENSURES ACCURATE BILLING

Each month we distribute more than 90,000 water bills to customers, and it is very important to us that your bill is accurate. Our Automated Meter Reading equipment allows us to electronically read an average of 4,700 meters each day, with the most accurate readings possible, reducing human error. We also have a series of checks in place to verify the accuracy of all bills, and do our best to double-check unusually high or low bills to ensure they are correct prior to mailing.

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## THE VALUE OF YOUR WATER

Water keeps us healthy, supports our economy, fights fires, nourishes landscaping and contributes to the high-quality of life we enjoy.

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In addition, our Conservation Department works with customers who are experiencing high bills. They offer advice and assistance on the best ways to manage water use, while addressing questions such as how water bills are calculated, and ways to save money on your bill. If you would like to have one of our Conservation staff members visit your home for a free water usage review, please email us at [conservation@tmwa.com](mailto:conservation@tmwa.com) request one by calling Customer Service at **834-8080, option 2**.

## WHAT CAUSES HIGH BILLS IN THE WINTER?

As winter approaches, your water usage should be decreasing, but if your bill seems significantly more than the average indoor use of 6,000 gallons a month, you could have a leak. Leaks can waste hundreds of gallons of water a day and they are not always as easy to spot as a dripping faucet.

The two most common causes for high water bills during the cold weather months are:

- 1. Toilet leaks.** Don't underestimate the amount of water a stuck or faulty flapper valve can use. If the water is running constantly, a toilet can use considerably more than 1,000 gallons per day. You can't always hear the toilet running, especially if you have more than one bathroom. If you have bathrooms in your home or business that aren't used daily, consider shutting them off at the wall to avoid unwanted water use.
- 2. Leaks due to irrigation systems not being properly winterized.** By now, your irrigation system should be off for the winter. This is one of the best ways to prevent water damage during months when cold winter weather can cause frozen pipes. For more on winterizing your home, please visit [www.tmwa.com/winterize](http://www.tmwa.com/winterize).

If you think you may have a phantom water waster on your property, use your water meter to diagnose the problem:

1. Turn off all water-using devices, including toilets.
2. Locate your water meter and write down the number currently showing on your meter.
3. Wait 20 minutes and look at your meter again. If the number has changed or the flow indicator has moved, you have a leaking water line.

Remember, you are responsible for the water usage at your home or business, even if that usage is from a leak. For detailed instructions on isolating a leak, please visit the Conservation section of [www.tmwa.com](http://www.tmwa.com).

## WHERE TO CALL

General Inquiries: . . . 834-8080 (option 2)  
Emergency Repair: . . . . . 834-8090  
Water Conservation: . . . . . 834-8005  
Water Quality: . . . . . 834-8118  
Water Rights: . . . . . 834-8029  
Ombudsman: . . . . . 848-0813

## HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

Wednesday, December 19  
TMWA Board Meeting

Tuesday, December 25  
Christmas Day  
(TMWA Offices Closed)

Tuesday, January 1  
New Year's Day  
(TMWA Offices Closed)

Wednesday, January 16  
TMWA Board Meeting

Monday, January 21  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
(TMWA Offices Closed)

