



## Water - Frequently Asked Questions:

Newport Utilities provides quality drinking water to nearly 13,000 customers in Cocke County. If you are experiencing water quality issues, water pressure issues, or notice your bill is higher than usual, here are a few things you can check first before calling NU:

### Water Quality

Occasionally, your water may appear discolored, especially if there has been recent service (such as line maintenance and line repair) or heavy rainfall.

- Is the discolored water only on the hot *or* cold water side? In only one fixture or room? If the water is only discolored in part of the plumbing system, then the discoloration is not from the Newport Utilities system. We recommend having a qualified plumber evaluate the situation.
- Run the cold water tap for two to three minutes to clear the line. You will likely notice an increase in water quality after doing this.
  - If you have a long water service line (*ex: along an extended driveway*), run the water for at least five minutes to give the line time to clear.
- Do you have galvanized pipe in your water plumbing system? Galvanized pipe is known to corrode on the inside. This corrosion restricts water flow and gives the water a reddish color due to iron rust.

### Water Pressure

If your water isn't flowing as much as you are used to, there are several possible causes:

- Is the pressure/flow problem in just one fixture or room? If the pressure is isolated to one fixture or room, the issue is not from the Newport Utilities system. We recommend having a qualified plumber assess the situation.
- Do you have a pressure regulator? Regulators can and do fail, and may be the cause of pressure issues. Seals can eventually wear to a point that high pressure slowly leaks through or the mechanical springs can stick closed.
- If the water flows strong at first, then quickly dies down, there is restriction somewhere in the pipe. This could be due to corrosion in the pipe, a bad regulator, or possibly a pipe that is too small for the demand.
- As noted above, galvanized pipe is subject to internal corrosion which causes the space in the pipe to become clogged with rust. This can cause a slow water flow, much like a clogged artery creates blood flow restriction.

## Leak/High Bill

- Turn off all water fixtures and appliances.
- Check to see if the NU water meter usage indicator is turning.
  - The red dial spins when the meter is registering water. It can be very slow, so observe for at least one minute.
  - If all fixtures are turned off, there should be no water flow registered by the water meter. If the water meter is registering water flow, you'll need to try to find where the water is going.



- Do you have valves you can turn off to isolate sections? If so, you can isolate sections and re-check the usage indicator. (*Ex: turn off the valve to a toilet and re-check water flow*)
- Have you checked the toilets?
  - Toilets are the most common cause of “leaks” or water usage. Check to be sure that toilets are not continuously running or filling.
    - If the fill valve is running continuously, water usage will add up quickly. Over a 30 day billing cycle, even a small flow of just ¼ GPM (gallons per minute) can add up to over 10,000 gallons!
    - Is water leaking through the flap in the tank? If the flap is leaking, it may not be noticeable. Try putting a little food coloring in the tank and don't use the toilet for at least two hours. Check to see if any color shows in the bowl. Food coloring in the tank should stay in the tank if it is not leaking. If color shows in the bowl, the flap is leaking. This is a very common problem and is generally fairly easy to fix using a toilet repair kit available at most hardware stores.
    - Are there any water spigots/hoses left on outside? Leaving a water hose running just one night can easily run over 2,500 gallons of water.
- Check exposed spigots/hoses for ruptures, especially after extremely cold temperatures. Hoses connected to a spigot may not drain fully allowing water to freeze in the hose and potentially causing the hose to crack or rupture.
- Have you checked the path of the service line between the house and the meter? If there is a leak between the meter and the house on the service line, then it could possibly create a noticeably wet area. This is not always the case, however; depending on soil type and other factors, the leak may not surface.
- Are there spots where water is surfacing? If you observe areas that are saturated and it is not related to storm runoff, it is likely there is a water leak.

**If NU responds to a service call request and determines that the issue is not in our system, but rather an issue on the customer's side, a service fee will apply (view service fees on our website: [NewportUtilities.com/Fees-and-Deposits](https://www.newportutilities.com/Fees-and-Deposits)). Please be advised that NU does not locate leaks within a customer's plumbing system and is not responsible for customer pumps. NU also does not locate private service lines.**