

Do you think your utility bill is larger than usual? Here are a few things to look into to find out why.

Troubleshooting High Consumption

The utility billing division will strive to provide accurate billing on a timely basis to all of our customers with the highest regard for public satisfaction. The utility billing division is available to assist in resolving any abnormalities on your bill. Please contact us at 913-856-7535 or utilites@gardnerkansas.gov.

Accurate History

Review the kWh/TGAL history on your account with a consumption history report. To access your online consumption history, click [here](#). You can compare your most recent month to that same month one year ago. Any changes made could be a factor in any large inconsistencies. The kWh is the electricity and TGAL is water consumed showing on your utility bill. On average households use 1000 kWh of energy and 2,000 gallons of water per person each month.

Actual One Month Service Bill

Are there other charges other than water, sewer and electric service? Extra service fees like deposits, reconnection fees or returned check? Are there previous balances or transferred balances included?

Days Of Use

Look into how many days are showing on this utility bill that you're being billed for on your usage. This will change from month to month considering some months have 31 days and meter reading schedules. Has your daily average changed significantly from other months in question?

Seasons

Compare your total monthly usage per season on a consumption history report, to access your online consumption history, click [here](#). Has the weather been hotter/colder than normal during this period? Has the garden hose been left on accidentally? Have you been watering your lawn more frequently, or recently fill your pool? Additional heating or cooling load will cause an increase in electric use. Heating and cooling your home averages around 44 percent of your total energy use. Using space heaters, fireplaces, livestock heaters or vehicle block heaters in the winter can dramatically increase your energy consumption. Running a dehumidifier, watering gardens and animals in the summer months will increase your water use.

List Appliances

Create a list of your appliances. This will be important since not all appliances use the same amount of electricity; therefore we may not realize how much electricity we are really using. Have you recently installed any new appliances? Click [here](#) for a list of appliances and their average electric usage.

Click [here](#) for information about purchasing a Kill-A-Watt monitor which lets you find out exactly how much electricity your appliances are using.

Lifestyle

No two households use the same amount of electricity or water the same way, so comparing your utility bill to your neighbor's is like comparing apples to oranges. Comparing your current usage to your past usage is a more accurate record. Remember to determine if the size of your household has increased or did someone spend more time at home. Have you added a new swimming pool or hot tub in your back yard? Have you had "guests" stay for an extended period? Do your hobbies include the use of power tools, ovens and other high kWh usage tools or appliances?

Water Leaks

A dripping faucet can waste 20 gallons a day? Leaks from faucets and toilets waste your water and your money. Leaks, whether unseen or unfixed, can waste hundreds and even thousands of gallons of water. It is important to routinely check your plumbing and home for leaky faucets, toilets, and outside taps. Most household leaks are easily repaired with parts from a hardware store. If you have a leak, your water bill will increase. However, there are many causes of high water bills.

Refrigeration

Where your refrigerators and freezers are located is very important. Never place them in direct sunlight an unfinished basement, garage or out-building. The refrigerator or freezer will run harder to overcome excessive heat during warmer months. Make sure they have adequate ventilation as well.

Equipment Maintenance

If an appliance is more than 15 years old, the efficiency of that appliance may be decreasing significantly and requiring more energy to do its job. It is important to clean or replace the condenser, coils or filters on some appliances regularly. You may need to replace the appliance itself. Many times old electrical wiring will have loose connections resulting in increased electrical use and create potential safety hazards.

Your Electric Meter Doesn't Go On Vacation

If you leave your home for an extended period of time for vacation or business, remember that any appliance you leave plugged in, will use electricity while you are gone, especially your hot water heater, freezer, refrigerator, HVAC system, landscape irrigation, well pump, etc. Most of us note that the TV and lights were not on, but we forget about these items.

When Should I Ask To Have My Meter Tested?

Meter tests should be a last resort instead of first. Meters measure energy use and because they are a mechanical device it is rare that they run fast. They are seldom the cause of a higher bill but often blamed. A faulty meter would be more likely to run slow. In the case of a meter check, if no problem is found, the cost of the test will be your expense. Please contact utilities@gardnerkansas.gov to request a meter test.