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High Utility Bill Investigation Checklist

An unusually high bill could indicate a plumbing issue in your home/business, a problem with your meter reading, or simply increased water usage from activities like watering a lawn or garden, filling a swimming pool, or hosting guests. To investigate a high bill, you can use the provided checklist to determine whether there's a legitimate reason for the increase or if a metering, billing, or plumbing issue is suspected.

If you suspect a plumbing problem or leak is causing a higher bill, consider contacting a plumber of your choice to investigate and perform any necessary repairs. If you have the city sewer service, your bill will also include sewer charges based on the water used. Per the City of Belpre Utility Board, water lost through leaks is still considered used since it passes through your water meter, and you will be charged accordingly.

If, after reviewing the checklist, you believe there may be an issue with your water meter, please contact the City of Belpre Utility Department at (740) 423-7592 with the relevant information ready.

Name/Company	
Service Address	
Account Number	

Checklist

Examine Bill:

- Do you see any penalty charges?
- Are there any one-time charges for meters, service establishments or water on/off?
- Was your consumption more this month than in the same month of prior years?
- Were there more days in this billing cycle than last billing cycle?
- Were your recent bills calculated from estimated usage or from actual usage?

Household Inside:

- Have you had any pipes replaced?
- Do you see or hear water running or dripping from toilets, facets, or sinks?
- Have you had any repairs completed in the last month? If so, did they use or release water in the process?
- Did you have additional guests, extra people, or employees in your home/business during your last billing cycle?

Household Outside:

- Does our water service feed any external buildings or water-using systems?
- Did you wash the windows or cars last month?

- Have you increased the frequency or duration of watering recently?
- Does the grass in your yard have puddles or large wet spots? Are there curious spongy areas in your lawn that ooze water when you step on them?
- Can you see any leaks in or around outdoor facets, pipes, or hoses?

Toilet(s):

- Have you had any toilet(s) repaired/replaced recently?
- Has the appliance been checked for any leaks?
- Is there a silent leak in the toilet? *(To find out, add a few drops of food coloring to the tank before bedtime and avoid using it overnight. If the bowl water is tinted in the morning, there's a leak.)*

Dishwasher:

- Has the appliance been repaired or replaced recently?
- Has the appliance been checked for any leaks?
- Is there water flowing even if the appliance is turned off?
- Is there any water pooling around the appliance or under the sink where it connects?

Washing Machine:

- Has the appliance been repaired or replaced recently?
- Has the appliance been checked for any leaks?
- Is there water flowing even if the appliance is turned off?
- Is there any water pooling around the appliance?
- Did you have guest or extra laundry demands last month?

Water Softener:

- Has the appliance been repaired or replaced recently?
- Has the appliance been checked for any leaks?
- Is there water flowing even if the appliance is turned off?
- Is there any water pooling around the appliance?
- Have you checked the cycle time for it?
- If water continues to go down the drain after it has regenerated, it is leaking and needs to be fixed. You can also turn the water softener off for a month and see if it's effective on your water bill.

Humidifier on Your Furnace:

- Is the float in the humidifier filling higher than the recommended manufacturer level?

Water Heater:

- Do you have boiler heat?
- Do you have a water-cooled air conditioner?
- Malfunctioning units may contribute to higher bills.

Ice Machine:

- Has the appliance been repaired or replaced recently?
- Has the appliance been checked for any leaks?
- Is there water flowing even if the appliance is turned off?
- Is there any water pooling around the appliance?

Pool or Hot Tub:

- Have you filled or drained your pool or hot tub recently?
- If you have an auto-fill system, is it working properly?
- Does the water level in the pool or hot tub drop more than ¼ inch per week?

Irrigation System:

- Are there wet spots in the yard or at the valve boxes which might indicate leaks?
- Did you turn on your sprinkler system around the same time this year as last year? Did you stop using your sprinkler system at the same time this year as last year?
- Has the system been turned off and recently turned back on?
- Are there missing or broken sprinkler heads?
- Have you increased or changed the frequency or duration of the watering cycles?

Sump Pump:

- Is it electric with a water back up system?
- Does the water backup system run off city water?