

TROUBLESHOOTING COMMON WATER PRESSURE CONCERNS

Water pressure can directly affect the function of your faucets. Knowing how to check your property's water pressure and troubleshooting common high- or low-pressure problems can keep your water flowing properly. Here's some helpful information to get you started.

The water pressure within the City of Oceanside's distribution system can range from about 30 pounds per square inch (psi) to 100 psi at a properties' water meter. Pressure within the system varies depending on the elevation of your property in relation to the elevation of the reservoir that provides water service for your area. Peak water use and routine water system operations also can cause water pressure in the distribution system to fluctuate. Other variables that may affect water pressure include plumbing restrictions, point of use treatment devices (cartridge filters, water softeners, etc.) and seasonal water demands.



The city cannot adjust the water pressure for specific properties; however, if you have concerns with high or low pressure, there are some steps you can take that may help resolve the issue.

Most home improvement stores sell inexpensive water pressure gauges that can be simply attached to your outside faucet or hose bib. This will be useful when trying to determine the on-site water pressure at your property. (You can also call the City's Customer Care Line at 760-435-4500 and speak to a Water Utilities Field Representative who can help you troubleshoot the

problem and determine if a site visit is needed to resolve the issue).

High Water Pressure

You may need a pressure reducing valve (PRV) if your water pressure is more than 80 psi. If the water pressure at your property is 80 psi or greater, a PRV will help decrease the water pressure. In accordance with Uniform Plumbing Codes, property owners and/or customers are responsible for installing and maintaining their own individual PRV devices whenever static water pressure exceeds 80 psi.

Most plumbing professionals recommend a PRV setting between 35 and 60 psi. Sustained pressure that exceeds 80 psi can damage on-site plumbing systems and may affect your water fixtures. PRVs should be installed on the customer's side of the water meter and are usually located inside the garage near the water heater, next to the house shut off valve or outside the house near the front hose bib.

Low Water Pressure

Decreased water pressure usually indicates a plumbing problem. If you're experiencing a decrease in water pressure at your property, the issue is typically within your plumbing system. The list below may help you identify the cause of the low pressure at your property.

- **Pressure Reducing Valve**

If the low pressure is at every faucet in the home and you have a pressure reducing valve (PRV) installed on your home plumbing system, you may want to verify that your PRV is set correctly. Most PRVs are bell-shaped devices that may be installed outside on the water line between your home and water meter.

PRVs should be adjusted by a licensed plumber.



- **Clogged Fixture**

If the low pressure is not affecting every faucet, the problem may just be a clogged or blocked faucet or shower head. Check the faucet's screens for rust, debris, scale or other particles that may be restricting flow. Many times simply soaking the showerhead in standard vinegar for a few hours will resolve the problem. If you have white particles in your shower head you may have a hot water heater dip tube failure and a replacement may be required. You may need to consult a licensed plumber to further evaluate your hot water heater.



- **Hot Water, Low Pressure**

If the low pressure is only affecting the hot water at your property, there could be a problem with your water heater. Check the shut-off valve near the water heater and make sure it is fully open. You may need to consult a licensed plumber to evaluate the condition of your water heater and determine if it is affecting your water pressure. Proper annual maintenance is recommended to keep your water heater performing optimally.

- **On-site Water Valve or Main Water Valve**

Most homes have an on-site water valve located near other on-site fixtures, like a water heater or water softener. The valve may also be located in the garage or on the line between the home and water meter. This valve allows you to shut off the main flow of water to the home. Make sure this valve is open completely. Even the slightest closure can restrict flows and decrease the water pressure.

- **On-site Leak**

Low pressure also can be caused by a water leak somewhere on the property.



- **Water Softeners**

If you have a water softener and are experiencing a sudden lowering of your home's water pressure, you may want to consider having a professional service technician evaluate your water softener's condition. One option is to temporarily put the softener on by-pass and see if pressure increases. If it does, the low pressure is probably caused by the water softener and it may need to be serviced or possibly replaced.

- **Neighborhood Low Pressure**

If you've confirmed the issue is throughout your home, talk to your neighbors! If they are also experiencing low pressure, it may be a larger issue such as a main break. This additional information is helpful for field staff to find the issues faster and restore everyone to the appropriate pressure.