

Detecting Leaks

We want to help our customers keep their bills as accurate as possible by reflecting the actual water that is used. Small leaks in your home can quickly add up to many gallons lost. A dripping faucet can waste 15 gallons a day. Just a 1/8" sized leak consumes more than 3,500 gallons per day. Most leaks are easy to find, but some can go undetected. If your bill is unusually high, a little investigation can save both water and money.

To find out if you have a leak, you may want to check

- ▶ Your toilet. It is not uncommon to lose more than 100 gallons a week to a toilet leak. You can check for leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring in the tank, then watch for a few minutes. If the color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak that needs to be repaired.
- ▶ Dishwashers and clothes washer. Look for drips or stains underneath or behind these appliances.
- ▶ Indoor and outdoor faucets. Replace worn gaskets and washers.
- ▶ Sprinkler systems. Check for damaged sprinkler system heads and system leaks.

Simple tips to avoid costly leaks

Are leaks wasting your money? Many people don't think about how much water they use until their bills arrive in the mail. By then, it's too late to consider what steps could have reduced water usage and water bills. A quick check for leaks can save you unnecessarily high water and sewer bills.

Your Water Meter: A Leak Detection Tool

You can check for leaks in your home by following this simple procedure.

- Turn off all water inside and outside.
- Locate your water meter (see diagrams below), jot down the reading and note the position of the 10 gallon red indicator, if present.
- Wait 20 to 30 minutes and read the meter again.
- If the leak indicator is spinning and the water is off, you have a leak.

If the indicator or numbers on the dial position have changed, there's a good chance you have a leak somewhere in your plumbing system.

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Below are simple tips to check for leaks in the two common sources: toilets and faucets

Water Wasters: Toilets

A leaky toilet could be the single most common leak source in your home. This can result in the loss of hundreds of gallons of water per day.

However, it's very easy to determine if your toilet is leaking by asking yourself the following questions:

- Do you find yourself jiggling the handle to stop noise?
- Do you hear strange, intermittent noises from the toilet?

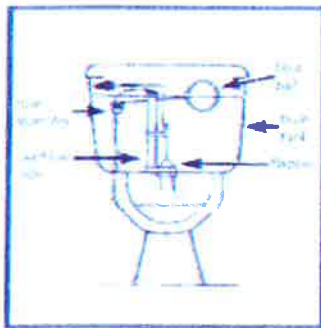
If you answered "yes" to either of these questions, your toilet is probably leaking. Toilets generally leak for two reasons. First, if the float assembly is not shutting off the water, it allows the water to escape into the overflow pipe. This problem can often be remedied by adjusting the float ball. Second, if the flapper is worn or not sealing properly, water will leak into the toilet bowl.

You can check for possible flapper leakage by using food color, or by using the dye tablets.

Here's how:

1. Drop food color (or dye tablets) into the toilet tank. **DO NOT FLUSH.**
2. Wait 15 to 20 minutes.
3. If color appears in the toilet bowl, the toilet is leaking and the necessary repairs should be made.

If you're unfamiliar with the parts of a toilet, use the diagram below for guidance. You might want to get a plumber if your toilet needs repair.



Faucets

It's important to remember that leaks don't disappear. While some occur only intermittently, like when the toilet is flushed, leaks very often become worse very rapidly.

Most leaks run 24 hours a day. That's nearly 9,000 hours a year!

If your toilet isn't the culprit, you might have a leak in a faucet. If your faucet drips after being turned off firmly, turn off the supply line. Take the faucet apart and replace the washer.

With faucets of simple design, these repairs are not difficult. However, if you're unsure, or if the washer doesn't stop the leak, consider calling a plumber.

The chart below details the severity of leaks and how many gallons of water is wasted



Check your outdoor water fixtures, including irrigation systems, for leaks because these leaks often go unnoticed.

Water Usage

Ever wonder how much water is used when taking a shower or washing dishes by hand? The chart below details water usage during daily activities. Average consumption per-day per-person equals 80 gallons

Activity	Gallons Used (conventional)	Gallons used (conservation*)
Toilet flushing	5-7 gallons per flush	1.5-3.5 gallons per flush
Shower	7-10 gallons per-minute	2-4 gallons per-minute
Bath	36-50 gallons	30-40 gallons (conventional tub)
Laundry	60 gallons	42 gallons
Dishwasher	15 gallons (normal load)	7.5-10 gallons (normal load)
Dishwashing by hand	30 gallons (tap running)	10-20 gallons (tap running)
Shaving	20 gallons (tap running)	2-5 gallons (tap running)
Brushing teeth	10 gallons (tap running)	2-3 gallons (tap running)
Washing hands	2 gallons (tap running)	1-2 gallons (tap running)

*Please check packaging on water saving fixtures to determine exact efficiency