

Identifying Water Leaks

Leaks Can Be Costly

In an average residence, 22 gallons of water are lost to leakages each day, and the most common culprits are leaking toilets or dripping faucets. This daily leakage volume is about equal to the amount of drinking water a family of 3 needs for two full weeks! The average annual sewer and water costs for 22 gallons of leakage per day can run as high as \$80 per household per year.

Leaking Toilets

It is not uncommon to find toilets leaking much more water than the average 22 gallons. Silent toilets leaks can account for up to 300 gallons of day of lost water without anybody noticing the leakage. This size of leak costs over \$500 dollars a year and should be repaired immediately.

To check your toilet for leaks, lift off the toilet tank lid. Without flushing, place about 10 drops of food coloring in the toilet tank. If water in the bowl turns color within 10 minutes, you have a toilet leak.

Locate a Leak

Follow these easy steps to determine if you may have a leak:

- Turn off all water inside and outside the house including showers, sinks, washing machine and any appliance that uses water.
- Take the lid off the meter box. Be careful, as lids can be heavy, and sometimes bugs and snakes may hide inside meter boxes.
- Watch the meter
- If your meter dial hand is moving, water is running somewhere in your system and you have a leak – go to step 4.
- If the hand is not moving, note the position of the hand and wait ten minutes. Check the meter again, if it has moved, you have a slow leak - go to step 4.
- Locate the main shut-off valve in your house. It is usually located near the hot water heater in the basement or garage. Turn off the valve.
- Turn on a faucet inside the house to test.
- If water still flows from the faucet after several seconds, the shut off valve is not working. There is no way to tell if the leak is indoors or outdoors.
- If no water flows through the faucet, the shut off valve is working. Return to the meter.
- Check if the meter's dial hand is moving.
- If the dial hand is still moving, water is flowing between the meter and the shut-off valve. That means you have an underground leak.
- If it is not moving, then you have an indoor leak.





Underground Plumbing Leaks

The property owner is responsible for maintaining underground piping on the customer's side of the water meter, beginning at the connection between the meter and the customer's home.

Leaks in underground plumbing can be caused by many different things. These may include age, rusting, stray electric currents from other underground utilities that can prematurely rust metallic piping, driving over piping with heavy trucks or equipment, poor initial installation, freezing and thawing of a pipeline, leaking joints or valves, or from simply opening and closing valves or starting and stopping pumps quickly.

Signs of Underground Leaks

- Unusually wet spots in landscaped areas and/or water pooling on the ground surface.
- An area that is green, moldy, soft, or mossy surrounded by drier conditions.
- A notable drop in water pressure/flow volume.
- A sudden problem with rusty water or dirt or air in the water supply (there are other causes for this besides a leak).
- A portion of an irrigated area is suddenly brown/dead/dying when it used to be thriving (water pressure is too low to enable distant heads to pop up properly).
- Heaving or cracking of paved areas.
- Sink holes or potholes.
- Uneven floor grade or leaning of a structure.
- Unexplained sudden increase in water use, consistently high water use, or water use that has been climbing at a fairly steady rate for several billing cycles.

If any of these conditions exist at your facility or home, you may have a leak. If you suspect a leak, you may need to hire a plumber to pinpoint the exact location and to perform any repairs.