

## **The Facts on Leaks:**

- Leaks can account for, on average, 11,000 gallons of water wasted in the home every year, which is enough to fill a backyard swimming pool.
- The amount of water leaked from U.S. homes could exceed more than 1 trillion gallons per year. That's equivalent to the annual water use of Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami combined.
- Ten percent of homes have leaks that waste 90 gallons or more per day.
- Common types of leaks found in the home include leaking toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and other leaking valves. All are easily correctable.
- Fixing easily corrected household water leaks can save homeowners more than 10 percent on their water bills.
- Keep your home leak-free by repairing dripping faucets, toilet valves, and showerheads. In most cases, fixture replacement parts don't require a major investment and can be installed by do-it-yourselfers.
- The vast majority of leaks can be eliminated after retrofitting a household with new WaterSense labeled fixtures and other high-efficiency appliances.

## **Leak Detection:**

- A good method to check for leaks is to examine your winter water usage. It's likely that a family of four has a serious leak problem if its winter water use exceeds 12,000 gallons per month.
- Check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, you probably have a leak.
- One way to find out if you have a toilet leak is to place a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank. If the color shows up in the bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Make sure to flush immediately after this experiment to avoid staining the tank.

## **Faucets and Showerheads:**

- A leaky faucet that drips at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons per year. A home with WaterSense labeled toilets could use that water to flush for six months!
- Leaky faucets can be reduced by checking faucet washers and gaskets for wear and replacing them if necessary. If you are replacing a faucet, look for the WaterSense label.
- A Showerhead leaking at 10 drips per minute wastes more than 500 gallons per year. That's enough water to wash 60 loads of dishes in your dishwasher.

- Most leaky showerheads can be fixed by ensuring a tight connection using pipe tape and a wrench.

### **Toilets:**

- If your toilet is running constantly, you could be wasting 200 gallons of water or more every day.
- If your toilet is leaking, the cause is most often an old, faulty toilet flapper. Over time, this inexpensive rubber part decays, or minerals build up on it. It's usually best to replace the whole rubber flapper. It's a relatively easy, inexpensive do-it-yourself project that pays for itself in no time.
- If you need to replace the entire toilet, look for a WaterSense labeled model. If a family of four replaces its older, inefficient toilets with new WaterSense labeled ones, it could save more than 16,000 gallons per year. Retrofitting the house could save the family approximately \$2,000 in water and wastewater bills over the lifetime of the toilets.

### **Outdoors:**

- An irrigation system should be checked each spring before use to make sure it was not damaged by frost or freezing.
- An irrigation system with pressure set at 60 psi that has a leak 1/32<sup>nd</sup> of an inch in diameter (about the thickness of a dime) can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month.
- Check your garden hose for leaks at its connection to the spigot. If it leaks while you run your hose, replace the nylon or rubber hose washer and ensure a tight fit to the spigot using pipe tape and a wrench.
- Always remember to turn off the spigot after each use. Garden hoses can burst at any time, and are more likely to burst when you are not around.
- Never leave garden hoses connected to spigots during times of freezing temperatures. This can lead not only to higher water bills but to frozen pipes, water damage and plumbing bills.

**For more information visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense)**

## **10 Conservation Tips to Remember**

- 1. Don't leave the sink running while you brush your teeth.**
- 2. Fully load the dishwasher and clothes washer before running them.**
- 3. When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run.**
- 4. Repair dripping faucets and leaky toilets. Dripping faucets can waste up to 2,000 gallons of water each year in the average home. Leaky toilets can waste as much as 200 gallons per day.**
- 5. Install water-efficient appliances in your home. Look for the EPA WaterSense labels, and check with your local water system to see if they offer rebates.**
- 6. Don't over-water your lawn, and water early in the morning or at night to avoid excess evaporation.**
- 7. When the driveway or sidewalk needs cleaning, consider a broom instead of a hose. It can save up to 80 gallons of water.**
- 8. If you have a swimming pool, use a cover. You will cut the loss of water by evaporation by 90 percent.**
- 9. Help preserve the quality of the available water supply by not overusing pesticides and fertilizers, avoiding flushing medications down the toilet or sink, and disposing of hazardous materials properly.**
- 10. Place rain barrels beneath your downspouts. The rainwater can be used for outdoor plants and trees or to wash a car.**