



Leaks Waste Precious Water

The drip, drip, drip from your kitchen or bathroom faucet, and the “Phantom” flushes of your toilets are not just irritating; they can be a surprisingly big waste of water, and cause an increase in your water bill. A dripping faucet may waste over 170 gallons per day.

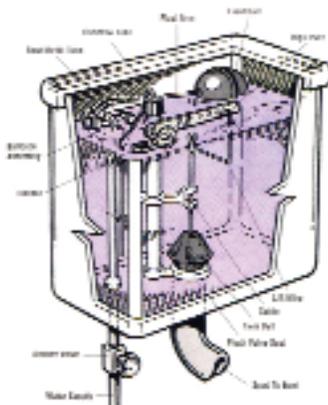
Undetected toilet leaks may waste over 50 gallons a day.

Locating Leaks

CAUTION: When working on plumbing fixtures, it is important to shut off the cold and hot water supply valves. These valves are usually below the sink. If they are not or if they do not turn easily, then shut off the master supply for the whole house.

Leaking faucets and showerheads are easily found, however many of the wasteful leaks in your home may go undetected. If you suspect a leak, but can't locate it, check your water meter at a time when no one is using water (hot or cold). If the digits on the meter are moving, you have a wasteful leak.

Toilet Leaks



A leaky toilet can waste a lot of water. To check for a leak, lift the lid off the tank. Without disturbing the float or flapper valve, put a few drops of food coloring or a leak detector tablet in the tank and wait to see if “color” shows up in the bowl without flushing. If color appears within ten minutes the ball valve may need replacing or the support assembly may need to be adjusted.

Take another look in the tank. If water is flowing into the overflow tube, the ballcock (the float-controlled valve which lets water into the tank) isn't closing properly - it's either worn out or needs adjustment. Try bending the float arm down. If the ballcock still doesn't close before water runs down the tube, it will need replacement.

If the ballcock isn't the problem, the flapper is probably worn out. First make sure there is no scale or grit preventing the flapper from closing properly. If the flapper is worn out, then replace it with another from your local hardware or plumbing supply store.

- Check ball valve to see if it is obstructed with grit or debris at the seal or if it is worn and in need of replacement.
- Check flush handle to see that it is working smoothly.
- The ball valve should drop squarely into the drain opening at the bottom of the tank. If it doesn't, adjust the connecting rod and make sure the valve moves freely.
- Be sure that the water level in the tank is at least 1/2 inch below the top of the overflow

tube. To adjust, simply bend the float arm to lower the water level.

- Inspect overflow tube for holes located below the water line. Replace tube if any are found.
- If water continues to run when the toilet tank is full, the inlet valve may be worn out and need replacement.

Faucet and Shower Leaks

If water is constantly dripping from the spout, pry off the plastic decorative cap and remove the screw to take off the faucet handle. Remember to first turn off the water supply valves. Using an adjustable crescent wrench, grip the large hexagonal nut and unscrew to reveal the stem. Pull out the stem and at the bottom of the stem you will see a rubber washer held in place by a screw. Remove the screw, replace the rubber washer with one of the same size and replace the screw. Reassemble the faucet and turn the supply valves on.



If your faucet leaks around the handle only when the water is turned on, you need to replace the packing - the pliable material beneath the hexagonal nut. Coat the threads of the stem with petroleum jelly and reassemble the faucet.

Check water line connections and valves for leaks. Tightening connection or replacing worn washers will generally solve problems.

Sprinkler Systems

To protect against freeze damage, disconnect hoses from hose bibs and drain or winterize underground sprinkler systems.

Checking sprinkler heads after mowing the lawn will reveal damage that might otherwise go undetected.

General

Locate water shut-off valves in your house. In case of emergencies, prompt action will prevent unnecessary damage and reduce water loss.

City of Arvada, Utilities personnel are available in case of emergencies. Call them at 720-898-7760, Monday - Friday, between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. After hours, weekends, during holidays call, 720-898-7820

Possible Leak Areas

- A. Ball or flapper valve; clean and inspect seal.
- B. Flush handle, connecting rod, and chain; check for smooth operation and for satisfactory closing of ball or flapper valve.
- C. Overflow tube; water level should be at least 1/2 inch below top, if not, adjust float arm. Check for corrosion holes below water line.
- D. Arm and ball; inspect for leaks into ball.
- E. Valve and pipe; inspect for closure of valve.
- F. Shut-off valve; make sure valve is closed before repairs are made.