

# Take the 10-Minute Fix-a-Leak Challenge



## Find and Fix Leaks to SAVE WATER



### Did You Know

that easy-to-fix water leaks account for nearly 1 trillion gallons of water wasted each year in U.S. homes? In fact, the average household leaks nearly 10,000 gallons of water per year, or the amount of water it takes to wash 300 loads of laundry, and could be costing you an extra 10 percent on your water bills.

In just 10 minutes, you can search your home for leaks and crack down on water waste. Many common household leaks are quick to find and easy to fix. Worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and leaking showerheads all are easily correctable and can save on your utility bill expenses and water in your community.

So put on your detective hat, lace up your running shoes, and take this 10-minute challenge to detect and chase down leaks!

[epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week](http://epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week)



### Start by Gathering Clues



#### Check Your Utility Bill

Start by examining your utility bill for January or February. It's likely that a family of four has a serious leak if its winter water use exceeds 8,000 gallons per month. You can also look for spikes—is your water use a lot higher this month than it was last month?



#### Read Your Water Meter

Check with your local water provider to determine if you have a traditional, manual read, water meter or and upgraded, digital read, water meter. Newer, upgraded, water meter boxes should not be opened, as this can damage equipment.

##### Manual Read Water Meter

Turn off all your water using fixtures at your house, then locate your water meter box, which is typically located near the street curb in front of your home. Once you've found the meter, carefully remove the lid and take a reading. Wait at least 15 minutes, and review the meter again. If the water use has increased or any dials are moving, you may have a leak.

##### Digital Read Water Meter

Login or signup to review your water use virtually in near-real time. If the online portal shows water usage during hours when you have confirmed that all fixtures are off, you may have a leak.



#### Test Your Toilet(s) for Leaks

Request free dye tabs from your water provider or place 10 drops of food coloring into the tank at the back of your toilet and let it sit for 10 minutes. If color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak. Make sure to flush afterward to avoid staining, and consider replacing your old toilet flapper if it is torn or worn.

While you're waiting to see if your toilet has a leak, walk around your house with the checklist on the next page and see if you can chase down any other water wasters.

# Checklist for Chasing Down Leaks

## Here are some of the places leaks may be hiding in your home.

Some leaks require a simple fix—a worn toilet flapper, loose pipe connection, or showerhead with stray spray. But you may want to consult a licensed plumber to stop your running toilet, broken sprinklers, water heater drips, or malfunctioning water supply lines. Take a quick inventory of clues to water waste:

### IN THE BATHROOM

- Toilets: Listen for running water and conduct the food coloring test described on the first page.
- Faucets: Listen for drips and turn on the tap to check for water going the wrong direction.
- Showerheads: Turn on and look for drips or stray sprays that can be stopped with plumbers tape.
- In the tub: Turn on the tub, then divert the water to the shower and see if there's still a lot of water coming from the tub spout; that could mean the tub spout diverter needs replacing.
- Under the sink: Check for pooling water under pipes and rust around joints and edges.

### IN THE KITCHEN

- Faucet: Listen for drips and tighten aerators or replace fixtures if necessary.
- Sprayer: Check to make sure water is spraying smoothly and clean openings as needed.
- Under the sink: Check for pooling water under pipes and rust around joints and edges.
- Appliances: Check for pooling water underneath dishwashers and refrigerators with ice makers, which could indicate a supply line leak.

### IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM AND/OR UTILITY ROOM

- Under the sink: Check for pooling water under pipe connections.
- Clothes washer: Check for pooling water, which could indicate a supply line leak.
- Water heater: Check beneath the tank for pooling water, rust, or other signs of leakage.

### DON'T FORGET TO GO OUTSIDE

- At the spigot: Ensure tight connections with the hose and see if the hose washer needs replacing.
- In-ground irrigation system: Check for broken sprinklers or nozzles spraying in the wrong direction. You may want to consult an irrigation auditor through Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper training at [qwel.net](http://qwel.net)

### FOR THE KIDS



Kids aren't just the leaders of tomorrow, they're the dreamers and doers of today. "Test Your WaterSense" and try other fun activities at Flo's Kids Zone at:

[www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-kids](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-kids).

### THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE

If any of your fixtures needs replacing, remember to look for the WaterSense label when purchasing plumbing products. WaterSense labeled products are independently certified to use at least 20 percent less water and perform as well or better than standard models.

For more information, visit [savingwaterpartnership.org](http://savingwaterpartnership.org)



### MARK AN X FOR LEAKS

