

Fix a Leak Week



Simple Steps to Big Savings

Drip. Drip. Drip. The average American household wastes more than 10,000 gallons each year from easy-to-fix water leaks, adding up to more than 1 trillion gallons of water lost annually nationwide. Many of these leaks are do-it-yourself fixes that could cost only a few dollars to address.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) encourages homeowners to find and fix leaks during Fix a Leak Week, March 15 to 21, 2010. Sponsored by EPA's WaterSense® program, Fix a Leak Week reminds homeowners of the easy steps they can take to help save water in their community now and for future generations.

1. Find Leaks

A good method to check for leaks is to examine your winter water use. If it exceeds 12,000 gallons per month, you probably have leaks. Walk around your home with eyes and ears open to find leaks, and don't forget to check pipes. You can also reveal a silent toilet leak by adding a few drops of food coloring to the tank and waiting 15 minutes without flushing. If color appears in the bowl, you have a leak. Be sure to flush afterwards so as not to stain the bowl or tank.

2. Fix Leaks

Many times fixing leaks can be done yourself and doesn't have to cost a cent. Both faucets and showerhead connections can be tightened or sealed with a wrench or pipe tape. For leaky toilets, the rubber flapper inside the tank is often the culprit. Over time the flapper decays, but replacing it only costs a few dollars. If you don't feel comfortable with these repairs, a licensed plumber can help. Irrigation systems and outdoor spigots can also be the source of water loss. A WaterSense irrigation partner who is certified in water-efficient irrigation technologies and techniques can ensure your outdoor irrigation system works properly.

3. Save Water

Fixing household leaks not only saves water but can reduce water utility bills by more than 10 percent. Dripping faucets can waste more than 3,000 gallons per year, a showerhead leaking 10 drips per minute about 500 gallons per year, and running toilets 200 gallons or more each day!

If you need to replace plumbing fixtures, save even more water by replacing them with WaterSense labeled models. The WaterSense label can be found on toilets, faucets, urinals, and—coming soon—showerheads that use at least 20 percent less water and are independently tested and certified to perform as well as or better than standard plumbing fixtures. For more information and tips about how to save water during Fix a Leak Week, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.