

Take the 10-minute water challenge



Did you know?

Easy to fix water leaks account for more than 1 trillion gallons of water wasted each year in U.S. homes. In fact, the average household leaks more than 10,000 gallons of water per year, or the amount of water it takes to wash 270 loads of laundry and could be costing you an extra 10% 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 are all easily correctable and can save on your utility bill expenses and water in your community.

Take the 10-minute challenge to detect and chase down leaks!

www.epa.gov/watersense

City of Fort Atkinson Water Utility

Detect and chase down leaks

Start by gathering clues - These clues can help detect leaks before you start investigating your home.

Check your utility bill

1

Examine your utility. Use the following as a guideline for usage. Average usage for an adult is 200 cubic feet per month and small children 100 cubic feet. Look for spikes in your water bill.

Take a toilet test

2

Put a few drops of food coloring or dark colored soda into the tank at the back of your toilet and let it sit for 15 to 20 minutes. Do not flush. If the color shows up in the bowl, your toilet is silently leaking and costing you money.

Stop jiggling the toilet handle!

3

If you can hear your toilet running, you could be using up to 5 gallons of water per minute!

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

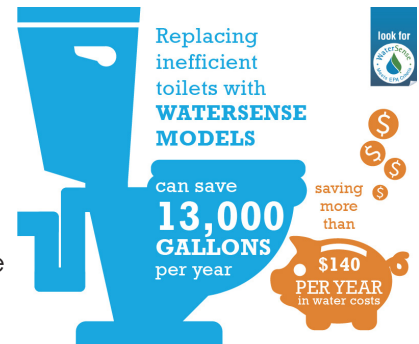
Here are some of the places leaks may be hiding in your home. Some leaks require a simple fix--a worn toilet flapper, loose pipe connection or showerhead with stray spray. But you may want to consult a licensed plumber to stop your running toilet, broken sprinklers, water heater drips or malfunctioning 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 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; 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 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.

In the basement/utility room

- 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 to improve system efficiency.

Throughout the house

Check for signs of moisture or mold on your walls, ceilings or floors. This could indicate a pipe is causing trouble behind the scenes and requires attention by a professional.

If fixtures need replacing 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 go to: www.epa.gov/watersense

