



AMERICAN WATER

WE KEEP LIFE FLOWING®

## LEAK DETECTION TIPS

## BECAUSE EVERY DROP COUNTS



At American Water, we are committed to environmental stewardship and the responsible management of our precious natural resources. By using these leak detection tips to identify and repair water leaks, you can help make a difference in your monthly bill while conserving water.

### WATER LEAKS ADD UP

Imagine that the dot inside these brackets [ • ] is the only hole in your home's water system. By its size alone, that hole may not seem worth tracking down. But that hole can waste thousands of gallons of water each month!

### KNOW HOW TO SHUT OFF YOUR WATER

Your main shut-off valve controls all of the water coming into your house. Everyone in your home should know where it's located and how to turn it off. In case of an emergency such as a burst pipe, fast action could prevent costly damage from flooding.

Locate your main water shut-off valve. In many homes, it is located near the water meter or close to where the water pipe enters the home. Hang the I.D. tag on the valve so you can find it quickly in an emergency.

### COMMON INDOOR LEAKS

#### THE LEAKY TOILET

Toilet flushes make up about 25 percent of the average household use. Accounting for the majority of indoor water waste, toilet leaks can often go unnoticed. Common causes include:

##### Float arm problems

Remove the lid from the flush tank. See if the overflow pipe and the plunger ball are working properly. Do this by flushing the toilet, watching the tank mechanism and listening. You should hear the water flow shut off. If the water does not shut off, check the water level. Most newer toilets have an adjusting screw on the top of the fill valve. Turn clockwise to lower level; counter-clockwise to raise level. If you have a toilet that doesn't have a set screw, it may be time to upgrade to a high efficiency toilet. If the toilet has a pilot-type float, you can lower the water

level by lowering the stiff wire-like link using the V-Shaped clip.

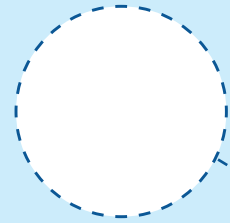
##### A tiny pinhole

A pinhole opening below the overflow pipe's water line could produce an invisible leak. Check for this by shining a flashlight down into the overflow pipe. If you see running water, you have a leak that should be repaired.

##### Defective plunger ball (flapper valve)

This is often a silent leak which causes the tank to continually drain and refill. Check for a worn or improperly seated plunger ball (flapper valve) by dropping a dye-tracing tablet or a few drops of food coloring, into the toilet tank. Do not flush. If a leak exists, the dye-colored water will seep into the bowl in about five minutes. If it does, the plunger ball (flapper valve) may need to be replaced or realigned.

### PLACE THIS TAG ON YOUR MAIN WATER SHUT-OFF VALVE

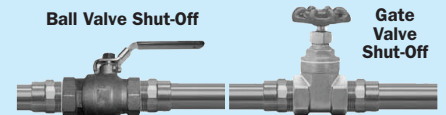


### WATER SHUT-OFF VALVE

You may want to test the valve to be sure it works properly. To test it, find your main shut-off valve and slowly close it.

- **Ball valve:** Generally, it only requires a quarter turn to close ball valves so that the handle is perpendicular to the water line. In the image below, the valve is open.
- **Gate valve:** Gate valves are generally closed by turning the handle clockwise. If the valve does not turn easily, do not force it and consider having the valve repaired so that it turns easily.

**Once the shut-off valve is completely closed:** Check sinks and other fixtures to be sure you have found the main valve and that it is working properly. To turn water back on, slowly turn the valve until fully reopened.



Ball Valve Shut-Off

Gate Valve Shut-Off

## THE LEAKY FAUCET

### A dripping faucet

Small leaks can add up to gallons of water (and money) wasted down the drain. If you notice a dripping faucet, first try closing it tightly. If it continues to drip, the most likely cause is a worn or wrong-size seat washer (also called a stem washer). To replace the washer yourself, you may need an adjustable wrench, a standard-blade screwdriver, and a Phillips screwdriver for older plumbing fixtures.

### Changing a washer

First, turn off the water supply to the faucet by closing the fixture's shut-off valve (often located under the sink). Turn the valve clockwise until it's tight. This shuts off the water to the sink only, and does not affect the water service for other parts of the house. Be sure the replacement washer is the same size as the worn one (if the worn washer was sized properly). If you need help, bring the worn washer to your plumbing supply or hardware store, and the store representative can help you match it with a new one.

## OUTDOOR LEAKS

When checking for water leaks, many people forget that water faucets and equipment exist outside as well as inside the home. Here are four areas you shouldn't overlook.

### Water faucets

Each faucet should be checked for leaks. Make sure faucets are closed when not in use. If you find a leaky faucet, change the washer (after closing the shut-off valve).

In colder climates, during the winter, these inside shut-off valves should be closed to prevent freeze-ups. Be sure to open the outside faucet after you have shut the inside valve so that any water still in the pipes will drain out. These shut-off valves are usually in your basement. One shut-off valve may control all the outdoor faucets.

### Automatic lawn-sprinkling system

Soft spots on your lawn may indicate a leak that is being absorbed into the ground.

### Swimming pool

The pool system's automatic shut-off valve could be malfunctioning, causing a continuous cycle of water to be pumped in and then drained out. If the water level stays higher than normal, or the pool overflows when people are using it, your automatic shut-off valve may need some attention.

### Service connecting line

If you find a soft, wet spot on your lawn or hear running water outside your house, you may have a leak in the service line to your house. Water soaks into the ground, causing the soft spots. Close the main shut-off valve. If the sound of running water continues, the outside service could be leaking.

## NOT-SO-COMMON TIPS ONLINE!

Scan the QR code for tips on how to detect not-so-common leaks on the following:



- Water heater tank
- Dishwasher
- Boiler
- Refrigerator ice-making unit
- Water softener
- Bath tubs and showers
- Washing machine
- Humidifier
- Fire suppression systems

## VISIT MYWATER FOR WATER USE DATA



Did you know you can view up to three years' worth of water usage data on MyWater?

**Not enrolled?** Visit [amwater.com/mywater](http://amwater.com/mywater). Be sure to have your account number handy.



## QUICK TIPS TO SAVE ON OUTDOOR WATER USE



### Only water when needed.

Depending on the weather or type of plants/turf, you may only need to water once or twice per week.



**Water early in the morning or later in the day** when the sun is low to minimize evaporation.



### Watch what you're watering.

Check sprinkler heads to be sure they're not wasting water on paved or unwanted areas. Reduce run times for shaded areas.



**If rain is in the forecast, turn your sprinkler system off ahead of time.** Install a WaterSense smart irrigation controller or rain sensors.



**Make use of rainwater.** Water collected in rain barrels can be used later to water outdoor plants.

American Water received the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2023 WaterSense Excellence Award for our strategic collaboration efforts in research and consumer education.

