Ten percent of homes have leaks that waste 90 gallons or more per day!

Common sources of leaks in the home include toilets, faucets, showerheads, and landscape irrigation. But you should also consider less obvious sources of leaks: water heaters, ice makers, dishwashers, water softeners and filtration systems.

Many of these are easily correctable, and fixing them can save about 10 percent on the average water bill.

"Little leaks" add up to BIG BILLS!

How much money are those "little leaks" costing you? This chart shows the water loss of common leaks, translated into dollars on your water bill.

Leak Source	Leak Size	Gallons per Day wasted *(approximate)*	Gallons per Month wasted *(approximate)*	Cost per Month *(approximate, at 2017 rates)*
Leaking Showerhead	10 drips per minute	1.4	43	>$1.00
Leaking Faucet	1 drip per second	9	259	>$1.00
In-Ground Irrigation	1/32" diameter	210	6,300	~$17.00
Running Toilet	1 gallon per minute	1,440	43,200	~$115.00

Watch for "sneaky" toilet leaks! A toilet leak may be silent, but your wallet will make noise. It can cost you over $115.00 per month! And when replacing your toilet, consider a high-efficiency model for extra water savings. For more information, visit ocwatersmart.com.

Have Additional Questions?

If you need more information on water leaks, or help troubleshooting a leak, we can arrange for a field staff member to meet with you – call (714) 536-5922.

What if the leak is outside your home?

- **Try the visual test first:** Look (and feel) for signs of water flow or seepage on your property – maybe a puddle that never dries or a darker spot on dry concrete. Check irrigation system or water feature connection points.



- **Check your garden hose** for leaks at its connection to the spigot. If it leaks while you run your hose, replace the nylon or rubber hose washer and ensure a tight connection to the spigot using pipe tape and a wrench.
- **Leaks in an irrigation system** can occur in several places. Most leaks occur because a valve fails to shut completely, but leaks in system pipes can happen.
- **Indications of leakage** include overgrown or particularly green areas of turf, soggy areas around spray heads and above ground hoses, jammed spray heads, torn heads, and torn hoses. In drip systems, leakage problems may be the result of tubing or tape that has been damaged by foot traffic.
- **To detect a leak in your irrigation system**, you must shut down all water use inside your home and be fairly certain that there is no leakage occurring indoors. Once you have done this, you can use your water meter to see if any water continues to flow into your system.

If this doesn't uncover the leak's location, you may need a professional leak detector's help. We advise that you not hire the first person you find. Take the time to get multiple bids for leak repairs. Most plumbers or contractors will give you a free estimate. And if the water is gushing, we can help you turn it off at the meter.

The City of Huntington Beach
Public Works Utilities Division

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Water Leak Detection Guide

HANDBOOK FOR HOMEOWNERS

Nationwide, more than 1 trillion gallons of water are lost annually due to household leaks. That's equal to the annual water use of more than 11 million homes.

The average household can waste more than 10,000 gallons each year due to correctable leaks. That's enough to wash 270 loads of laundry!

How do you know if you have a leak?

Your water bill may be higher than usual (by a little or a lot). Or you may have received a "potential leak" notice (continuous usage triggers a "leak check" alarm on our "smart meters").

Step 1: Check your meter

Don't know where your meter is located? We can help – call us at (714) 536-5922.

- Make certain NO water is being used inside or outside the house.
- Check the LCD display on your meter face. If a number other than 0000 is displayed, you may have a leak. *(Have a flashlight ready as it may be needed to activate the solar display if it is not in direct sunlight.)*



Leak indicator icon displays a possible leak when:

Flashing: Indicates an intermittent leak; water has been used for at least 50 of the 96 15-minute intervals during the previous 24-hour period.

On Continuously: Indicates water use during all 96 15-minute intervals during the previous 24-hour period.

OFF: No leak indicated.

Planning to Do-It-Yourself? Find videos on fixing common household leaks, including faucets and toilets on YouTube. Your local hardware store pros can be another helpful resource.

YouTube

Step 2: Isolate the leak

To find out whether the leak is inside or outside:

- **Turn off your home's main water shut-off valve** – usually found outside near garage. If you don't have a main shutoff, turn off all water-using fixtures in the home.
- **Check your meter again:** Did the dial stop moving? If so, you've isolated the leak to inside. If the dial keeps moving, the leak is outside between the meter and the house, or possibly in your irrigation system. If the leak is inside, start by checking toilets and faucets.
- **Check the toilet for leaks** by removing the top off the tank and listening very closely. If you hear any hissing at all, try to locate where it is coming from. You should also check the lift chain, to ensure it isn't catching on anything, and make certain the rubber flapper is seating properly. Look for corrosion and, if necessary, clean this area. It is recommended that flappers be replaced every three to five years. If you locate the area where the leak is coming from, determine if you can fix it. If you can't, then call a plumber.
- **Toilet Dye Test:** Drop a dye tablet or a few drops of food coloring in the tank. Wait overnight if possible (the leak may be intermittent) or at least 30 minutes. If the dye has run into the bowl, the toilet has a leak.



Major Working Parts of the Float Cup Toilet Mechanism

1. Tank lever
2. Float cup
3. Fill valve
4. Overflow tube
5. Lift chain
6. Rubber flapper
7. Valve seat

Dye Tablets: Though food coloring works very well for checking your toilet, the City of Huntington Beach Public Works Utilities Division offers dye tablets for your use.To get some, contact the division at (714) 536-5922.

Caution: Before doing dye tab or food coloring test (as per toilet checklist), remove any in-tank cleaner and flush once. It's been proven that chlorine products placed in the tank may decrease the life of your flapper. If you use in-tank chlorine products, you may want to check the flapper more often.

Fixing faucets and showerheads

- **A faucet that leaks** at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons per year. That's the amount of water needed to take more than 180 showers!
- Leaky faucets can be fixed by checking faucet washers and gaskets for wear and replacing them if necessary.
- **A showerhead leaking** at 10 drips per minute wastes more than 500 gallons per year. That's the amount of water it takes to wash 60 loads of dishes in your dishwasher.
- Most leaky showerheads can be fixed by ensuring a tight connection using pipe tape and a wrench. If you are replacing a showerhead, look for one that has earned the WaterSense label.



Step 3: If you don't find the leak . . .

The top two reasons for "mysterious" water leaks are a leaking toilet or a leak between the meter and the house. If isolating toilets and checking your grounds for visible water signs doesn't uncover the leak source, this is the time to call in a **professional leak detection company**.

Many plumbers can perform leak detection as well as leak repair services. *Unfortunately, the City of Huntington Beach Public Works Utilities Division cannot help locate leaks or pipelines on private property* – the pipes within and beneath the property are the homeowner's responsibility.

Step 4: Fixing the leak: DIY or call a Pro?

Many household leaks can be solved with simple tools and a little education – and fortunately, Do-It-Yourselfers have access to multiple resources. But even if you must pay for repairs, you will still save money in the long run.

