

Finding Leaks



Where's your emergency shut-off?

If a water pipe broke in your home, could you quickly find the shut-off valve? Know where it's located before you have an emergency. It should be in or near your house. Look in the following places:

- In the basement or crawl space, where the water line enters the home.
- In the garage where the water line enters the wall or ceiling, near the water heater or laundry hookup.
- Outside near the foundation, often protected by a concrete ring or clay pipe.

To find out if your system has any leaks – even ones you can't see – follow these steps:

A dripping faucet or other small leak in your water system may not seem like big problem. But those drops quickly start adding up – and can waste up to 60,000 gallons of water a year if left unchecked. A leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons per day – the equivalent of 50 extra flushes per day.

1. Turn off all faucets and water-using appliances, such as the dish and clothes washers.
2. Locate your water meter (see below) and lift the cover for the meter dial
3. Most meters have a red “telltale” indicator. If you see it moving when all the water is turned off, you probably have a leak.

If your meter doesn't have a telltale, simply compare two readings of your meter over 30-60 minutes of time:

1. Reading your meter is like reading the odometer of a car. Read the numbers from left to right that appear under or over the words "Cubic Feet" or "Gallons":
 - The first number on the right represents one cubic foot or gallon.
 - The second number from the right represents 10 cubic feet, or 10 gallons. The third from the number (usually a different color) represents 100 cubic feet (or one "CCF"), or 1,000 gallons (one "kgal").
 - One revolution of the meter sweep-hand (the arm that goes around in a circle) equals one cubic foot or 7.48 gallons.
2. Read and write down the entire reading (all numbers)
3. Wait 30-60 minutes, without using any water. Check the reading again. If the reading has changed, you probably have a leak somewhere in your plumbing system.

To find your water meter

If your water meter is inside your house, you'll usually find it in your basement, crawl space or utility room. If it's outside, look for a covered "pit" in front of your house, set flush to the ground.



Reading your meter

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One revolution of the meter sweep-hand (the arm that goes around in a circle) equals one cubic foot or 7.48 gallons. Though some meters register in gallons, the Braintree Water and Sewer Department bills in units of 100 cubic feet, or CCFs, which equal 748 gallons.

Looking for leaks

Here's a checklist of the places you should look for drips or moisture that indicates a plumbing leak:

Indoors

Kitchen

- Sink faucet and spray hose
- Dishwasher
- Refrigerator (including icemaker)

Bathrooms and lavatories

- Toilets
- Bathtub faucets
- Showerheads

- Sink faucets
- Jacuzzis
- Bidets

Laundry rooms, utility rooms and basements

- Washing machine
- Water softener
- Humidifier
- Hot water tank
- Boiler
- Utility sink
- Pipes and shut-offs

Outdoors

- Faucets
- Garden hose and connections
- Lawn sprinkler system
- Swimming pool
- Hot tub or spa
- Ponds and fountains

Tips

- Check toilets for leaks by dropping a little food coloring into the tank. Wait about 10 minutes without flushing. If color appears in the bowl, you have a leak and probably need to replace internal parts.

- Check for moist spots around and under the house plumbing and around outdoor plumbing. You may need to call a plumber to repair those leaks, which, besides wasting water, can also damage floors, walls and ceilings.

Responsibility for Leaks

If a leak occurs on the property side of the meter, the property owner is responsible for the leak charges and repair costs. If you have checked for leaks and yet the dials are still turning, you may have a hidden leak in an underground pipe. Contact a reputable plumber for additional help and service. If you have purchased a water line protection plan such as Homeowner Safety Valve or AAA's plan, contact the service provider for service.