



City of Frostburg

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Did You Know

that easy-to-fix water leaks account for nearly 1 trillion gallons of water wasted each year in U.S. homes? In fact, the average household leaks nearly 10,000 gallons of water per year, or the amount of water it takes to wash 300 loads of laundry, and could be costing you an extra 10 percent 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 all are easily correctable and can save on your utility bill expenses and water in your community.

DETECT AND CHASE DOWN LEAKS

Start by Gathering Clues

These clues can help you detect leaks before you even start investigating your home.

1. Check Your Utility Bill





A place to start is to examine your utility bill for January or February. It's likely that a family of four has a serious leak problem if its winter water use exceeds 36,000 gallons per quarter. You can also look for spikes—is your water use a lot higher this quarter than it was last quarter?


2. Read Your Water Meter

Find your water meter, which is usually in the basement of your home in cold climates. Now that you've found the meter, take a reading during a period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same after two hours, you probably have a leak. Here's a tip on how to read a water meter: www.smarthomewaterguide.org/how-to-read-your-water-meter.

3. Take a Toilet Test

Put a few drops of food coloring (or free dye tablets from City Hall) into the tank at the back of your toilet and let it sit for 15 minutes. If color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak. Make sure to flush afterward to avoid staining, and consider replacing your old toilet flapper if it is torn or worn.

Waste per quarter at 60 psi water pressure	
Diameter of stream	Gallons
 1/4 "	1,181,500
 3/16 "	666,000
 1/8 "	296,000
 1/16 "	74,000



A continuous leak from a hole this size would, over a 3 month period, waste water in the amounts shown above.

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 spout; that could mean the tub spout diverter needs replacing.
 - Under the sink: Check for pooling water under pipes and rust around joints and edges.
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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.
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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.
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IN THE BASEMENT OR UTILITY ROOM

- Water heater: Check beneath the tank for pooling water, rust, or other signs of leakage.
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THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE

- Check for signs of moisture or mold on your walls, ceilings, or floors. This could indicate that a pipe is wreaking havoc behind the scenes and requires the attention of a professional.
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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.
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