



City of Melvindale

Department of Water & Sewerage
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DETECTING HOUSEHOLD LEAKS

The Water Department reads your meter only at intervals of approximately 90 days. In the interval between regular quarterly readings, it is to your best interest to detect any possible leakage by your own reading of the meter, at least once a month. Read the first four numbers on the face of the meter, from left to right.

Most household water meters are equipped with a built in leak detector dial. This dial is usually either in the shape of a small red triangle or diamond, and is located on the face of your water meter. It is generally located below the meter read number, to the left side. Make sure no one is actively using water in the house when you check this dial. If the triangle/diamond is ticking or moving at all, it is indicating that water is flowing thru your meter at that exact moment. Therefore, you have a leak since you are not actively using the water. Now you must determine where the leak exists within your house.

TOILET LEAKS

Toilets are the biggest source of indoor water use. They are also a major source of leaks. In fact, some studies show that as many as 20% of all household toilets leak.

If you hear water trickling through the toilet long after you flushed it – it's leaking. The most common causes of a running toilet are found in the upper tank. In order to fix a leak, take the top off the tank and look inside. It might be something as simple as the chain being tangled. Also take a look in the drain (flush valve seat), underneath the tank ball (stopper). Clean out any debris collected there. If that doesn't work, you may need to replace the tank ball (stopper). Another potential cause of a running toilet could be the float ball. If you pick up on the float ball and the water shuts off, then you know the problem is right there. Simply bend the tube connected to the float ball down until the natural level of the water shuts the valve off – about an inch and a half below the overflow tube.

Another problem could be that the float ball has filled up with water and has lost its buoyancy. In that case, buy a replacement and simply screw it on, which will restore the toilet to good working order.

If adjusting the ball float does not stop the toilet from running, the problem is probably in the ball cock valve itself. It is very easy to take the ball cock valve apart and install a new o-ring and valve. If this does not do the trick, then you may have to replace the entire ball cock. Make sure to get one that's exactly the same height as the one you're replacing. Even if you don't hear or see water running, your toilet may have a "Silent Leak". To test for a silent leak, put a few drops of food coloring into the tank. **DO NOT FLUSH.** Wait for about 10 minutes. If the coloring appears in the bowl, without flushing, you have a silent leak. This is usually caused by a worn plunger ball or flapper valve in the bottom of the toilet tank. If you are not sure how to repair this type of leak you should call a plumber to avoid any further problems or before the leak gets worse.

LEAKING FIXTURES

Water waste from plumbing fixtures, like kitchen and bathroom faucets, is also important to address and should be fixed immediately after they are discovered. A minor drip from a faucet, even if it may seem small, can waste anywhere from 170 gallons to 3,600 gallons in a 24 hour period. Small leaks running constantly can have a significant impact on a household water bill. Rust corrosion, the hardening of rubber valves and other changes result in leakage from plumbing fixtures.

HUMIDIFIERS AND ICE MAKERS

We recommend if you have a humidifier on your furnace or an automatic ice maker in your freezer, to have them inspected regularly. Leaks can occur on these two items, and are not as easily detectable.