



National "Fix A Leak Week"

Break out the magnifying glass and dust off the Sherlock hat.

It's time to crack down on those sneaky leaks because March 19 — 25 is national "Fix A Leak Week." It's that special time to get intimate with your home and check for leaks in plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems. Uncovering hidden leaks can have many benefits, in addition to saving money on costly repairs. But pesky leaks can be hard to find, so if you have trouble pinpointing the leak's source, a plumbing professional can assist.

Household leaks cause more than 10,000 gallons of waste water annually, with some leaks wasting 90 gallons or more per day, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

With average plumbing costs ranging from \$350 to \$2,000, a few preventative measures can potentially save you a significant amount of money. Here are some tips to help you be on the alert for trouble:

- Take a look at your water usage during colder months, such as January or February. If a family of four exceeds 12,000 gallons per month, there could be potential leaks.
- Check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter changes at all, you probably have a leak.
- Identify toilet leaks by placing a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank. If any color shows up in the bowl after 10 minutes, you have a leak. (Be sure to flush immediately after the experiment to avoid staining the tank.)
- To check for surface leaks, examine faucet gaskets and pipe fittings for any water on the outside of the pipe.

Another way to save money and keep plumbing in good shape is to monitor what goes down your sinks. During the winter months when individuals tend to cook more often, there's a greater possibility of clogging your pipes. Fats, oils and grease (FOGs) harm sewer lines, storm drains and waterways. Properly disposing of FOGs will prevent grease buildups from blocking sewer lines. It will also stop sewer overflows from seeping into streets and storm drains. If you generate large amounts of used cooking oil, reuse or recycle it – never pour it down the drain.

If you dispose of your FOGs properly, it will be better for the environment and help you avoid costly repairs in the future. The best way to prevent the need for repairs is to follow the simple steps listed below when disposing of grease in your kitchen:

- Scrape food scraps from dishes into trashcans and garbage bags and dispose of the bags properly.
- Remove oil and grease from dishes, pans, fryers and griddles—cooling first before removing excess grease.
- Put oil and grease in covered collection containers and dispose in the trash.
- Pre-wash dishes and pans with cold water before putting them in the dishwasher.

National “Fix A Leak Week” is approaching, so make sure to be aware of these tips and you will not only save water but also save money.