

How to Find Leaks

If you've determined you have at least one leak, here are some ways to track it (or them) down. Note that once you've determined where the leak is, you may need help from a plumber or a repair specialist.

In the house

- **Bathtubs and showers.** Check the spout and shower head for dripping water. A new washer may be all that's needed. You may be able to do this repair yourself by unscrewing the faucet and replacing the washer with one of the same size. But before doing this repair, close your home's main shut-off valve.
- **Toilets.** Your toilet may have a silent leak, or your toilet may sporadically run without flushing. Drop a little food coloring in the tank. Wait about 10 minutes without flushing. If color appears in the bowl, you have a leak.
- **Dishwasher.** Water accumulated on the floor near the unit could be a sign of a leak.
- **Refrigerator ice-making unit.** A leak in the ice-making unit will cause excessive accumulations of ice in the freezer, and may produce small puddles of water under the refrigerator.
- **Sinks and other faucets.** Check for slower leaks by noting wetness in your sink basins. Make sure to look at every faucet in the house, even those that are rarely used.

In the basement or garage

- **Hot water tank.** The pressure valve release could be stuck. This valve is most often found near the top of the tank, and is usually a large brass fitting threaded to the tank. If it's not working properly, water will be leaking from it, dripping down the side of the tank and accumulating on the floor.
- **Washing machine.** If you see water on the floor near the machine, it's a sign of a possible leak.
- **Water softener.** A leak could be caused if your water softener is not recycling properly. The cycling process, regulated by a timer, often occurs between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. You're likely to have a leak in this unit if you hear the sound of constantly running water.
- **Humidifier.** Water accumulated beneath the unit is a sign of a leak. Caution: If the overflow discharge is piped into a sewer or drainage line, you may not find any visual signs of a leak. Listen for the sound of running water. If it's continuous, there could be a leak.
- **Boiler.** Listen for the sound of running water. If it's continuous, and doesn't stop and start periodically, there could be an underground leak in your boiler system. Call your plumber.