

# Be a Leak Detective...Stop the Drop!



Unlike some other kinds of leaks, a leaking faucet is obvious... you can see it, you can hear it. If a seldom used tap is leaking, however, that may not be the case, and it will continue to drip, drip, drip until a significant amount of water...and your money...have gone right down the drain.

Even the smallest drip can waste up to 20 gallons per day. That's about 6 cents per day, \$1.83 per month, or \$21.96 per year! In most cases, a leaking faucet is caused by a worn washer or "O" ring, and they are not difficult to replace.

Water softeners, sprinkling systems and swimming pools with automatic fill devices are other possible source for leaks.

◆ Repair **leaky faucets** promptly. It is easy to do, it costs very little and can make a substantial savings in your water bills.

◆ Check water line connections and faucets for leaks. A slow drip can waste as much as 170 gallons of water EACH DAY, or 5,000 gallons a month. This will increase your water bill.

◆ Set the thermostat on the hot water heater at a reasonable level. Extremely hot settings waste water (because it takes some extra cold water to make it usable) and energy and can even cause minor burns. ◆ Make sure that the line from the water meter to your house is free of leaks. To check, turn off all indoor and outdoor faucets and water-using appliances. The water meter should be read at 10 to 20 minute intervals. If it continues to run or turn, a leak probably exists and needs to be located.

**Toilets** are notorious water wasters because they can have "silent" leaks that are not detected until they have run up the water bill. One sure sign of a problem is if the toilet "runs" after being



flushed... which can waste four to five gallons each minute it does so.

The most common kind of toilet leak occurs when the flapper valve at the bottom of the tank does not "seat" properly, and water leaks around it into the toilet bowl. This can sometimes occur without even being heard.

To check for a **leaking toilet**, you will need some food coloring (any color). Flush the toilet. Then put enough coloring in the tank to color the water. Do not flush the toilet again for at least an hour. If the water in the bowl of the toilet shows the coloring,



Some types of toilet leaks are relatively easy to fix.

The problem may be as simple as having too much water in the tank that it spills into the overflow tube. In that case, the float can be adjusted so the water shuts off slightly below the overflow tube.

If the flapper ball is worn or doesn't seat properly, it should be replaced. Be sure to purchase the appropriate replacement part. If the handle needs to be "jiggled" constantly to keep the toilet from "running," the chain (to the flapper) -- or the handle itself -- might be sticking, and can be corrected by a minor adjustment.

If none of these home remedies solve the problem, call a plumber...better to have professional help than flushing your dollars down the drain! ■

