



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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For Immediate Release – March 14, 2011
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March 14-20: Fix a Leak Week

MADISON - How long will you ignore that drip in the shower? How about the leaky spigot outside the house, or that running toilet? Household leaks waste both valuable water resources and money. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the average household can leak up to 10,000 gallons of water per year—enough to fill a backyard swimming pool!

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) is promoting “Fix a Leak Week” from March 14 to 20, 2011, to remind homeowners to check their plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems for leaks. Common types of leaks found in the home include leaking toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and other leaking valves.

“Fixing leaks is an easy way to save money. A family of four that replaces its home's older toilets with WaterSense labeled models will save more than \$90 per year in reduced water utility bills. Many Wisconsin water utilities offer rebates for WaterSense labeled toilets,” said Jeff Ripp, PSC Water Conservation Coordinator.

To find leaks in your home check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter changes at all, you might have a leak.

Toilets:

- If your toilet runs constantly, you could be wasting 200 gallons of water or more every day. Place a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank. If any color shows up in the bowl before you flush, you have a leak. Be sure to flush immediately after the experiment to avoid staining the tank.
- If your toilet is leaking, the cause is most often an old, faulty toilet flapper. Over time, this inexpensive rubber part decays, or minerals build up on it. It is usually best to replace the whole rubber flapper—a relatively easy, inexpensive do-it-yourself project that pays for itself in no time.

Faucets and Showerheads:

- A leaky faucet that drips at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons per year. Leaky faucets can be reduced by checking faucet washers and gaskets for wear and replacing them if necessary.

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- A showerhead leaking at 10 drips per minute wastes more than 500 gallons per year. That's enough water to wash 60 loads of dishes in your dishwasher.
- Most leaky showerheads can be fixed by ensuring a tight connection using pipe tape and a wrench.

Outdoors:

- An irrigation system should be checked each spring before use to make sure it was not damaged by frost or freezing. An irrigation system with pressure set at 60 pounds per square inch that has a leak 1/32nd of an inch in diameter (about the thickness of a dime) can waste about 6,300 gallons per month.
- Check your garden hose for leaks at its connection to the spigot. If it leaks while you run your hose, replace the nylon or rubber hose washer and ensure a tight connection to the spigot using pipe tape and a wrench.

For a list of Wisconsin water utilities that offer rebates on WaterSense Toilets, visit:

<http://psc.wi.gov/conservation/documents/wiwaterrebates.pdf>.

For more information on conserving water, visit the PSC web site at:

<http://psc.wi.gov/conservation/water/wc-overview.htm>

For more information on Fix a Leak Week, visit

http://www.epa.gov/WaterSense/water_efficiency/fix_a_leak.html

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