



How to Detect Water Leaks

An average California home loses approximately 31 gallons of water per day to leaks. To determine if you have a leak check your City of Ceres Water Meter Portal account at <http://meterportal.ci.ceres.ca.us>. Once you have created your account, the portal will generate a leak notification if your meter registers a leak to your email or in the form of a text message. If you don't have access to a computer or a smart phone you can also check for leaks by looking at your leak detection tool, which is located at the top of your water meter.

Steps to Check for a Water Leak

1. Make sure **no** water is being used inside or outside of your house.
2. Locate your water meter & check the leak indicator to see if it is moving. Depending on the brand of your meter, the leak indicator could be a small triangular shaped dial or a small silver wheel that rotates when water is flowing through the meter. If the dial is moving, chances are, you have a leak.
3. You can also take a meter reading & wait 1 or 2 hours and take another meter reading (make sure no water is used during this time). If the reading has changed, you have a leak.

After you have determined that you have a leak, the next step is to determine if the leak is inside or outside of your house.

1. Locate your home's main shut off valve & shut off the water at the valve. Typically, you will find the shut off valve in the basement or garage directly behind an outdoor faucet, or outside below an outdoor faucet.
2. Again, check the leak indicator for movement or use the meter reading method, making sure not to use any water during this period. If the leak indicator stops moving or there is no change in the meter readings, then you have a leak inside of the house. If the leak indicator continues to move or there is a change in the meter readings, then the leak is outside between the meter & the house. If you are unable to locate the leak, you may need to call a plumber.

Leaking Faucets

Leaking faucets are generally a result of a worn rubber washer. The washer on a sink is usually located under the handle. These are relatively easy to replace, if you have the right tools. It does require shutting off the water under the sink or at the main shutoff valve and removing the handle. (*Note: faucet handles are not shutoff valves.*) Check your local hardware store on how to repair faucet leaks.

Leaking Toilets

Toilet leaks can waste hundreds of gallons and often times are silent. Even a small leak can add up to a lot of wasted water and money over time. Fortunately, most toilet leaks are easy and inexpensive to repair. To help determine if you have a leaking toilet, simply remove the tank lid and place a few drops of food coloring in back of the toilet tank or leak detector dye tablets. Wait about 30 minutes, without flushing, and then look in the toilet bowl to see if any color has come through. If the water is clear, water is not leaking. If you see coloring in the bowl you have a leak. In most cases, you will simply just need to replace the toilet flapper and/or filling mechanism.

If you decided to replace the toilet the City of Ceres offers a \$75.00 rebate for the replacement of inefficient toilets with a low flow toilet that utilizes 1.6 or less gallons per flush.

Flapper Valve Leaks

The most common reason for a leaking toilet is a flapper valve that is improperly working and/or sealing. The flapper is the rubber valve in the bottom of the tank that lifts up when the toilet is flushed. If the flapper is worn or cracked, it allows water to continuously flow from the tank into the toilet bowl without flushing.

Flush Handle Problems

If the handle needs to be jiggled to keep the toilet from running, the flush level bar & chain (or the handle itself) may be sticking. Adjust the nut that secures it in the toilet tank, if that doesn't work you may need to replace the handle.

Overflow Tube Leaks

Ideally the water level should be set so that is about even with the fill line on the back of the toilet tank (approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " below the overflow tube). If the water is too high in the toilet tank and is spilling into the overflow tube, the water level can be adjusted by turning the adjustment screw or by very gently bending the float arm down so that the water shuts off at a level below the overflow tube.

Note: If none of these steps solve the problem, you may need to contact a plumber to repair or replace the toilet.

Finding Other Water Leaks

The water you drink and bathe with is delivered under pressure, so a leak can be very obvious. However the exact location of a leak may not always be immediately obvious. Some leaks may start at one location, then flow along a ledge or other channel for a distance before they drain down and create some visible damage.

Look for wet, warped or discoloration stains on your ceilings, floors, walls and woodwork (such as the bottom of your kitchen or bathroom sink cabinet). As you attempt repair, be sure to check twice for the

actual location of the leak, not just the resulting damage from the leak. Condensation can also be a form of water leak. While condensation is normal, excessive condensation can cause damage to your walls, ceilings, floors and woodworking. If there is too much condensation, insulating your pipes may stop or reduce the condensation.

Underground Leak Detection Visual

1. Look (and feel) for portions of your property that are always wet.
2. Look at your driveway, curb or street for evidence of water flow. The evidence may not be a steady stream of water; it may only be a puddle that never dries up, or a darker spot.

Meter Reading

1. Look at your water meter & write down the meter reading. Don't run any water for a few hours. Re-read your meter.
2. If it shows use, and you've already fixed all other known leaks, then you may have an underground leak.

If you have any questions or need additional help please contact our Public Works office Monday – Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm at (209) 538-5732.

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