

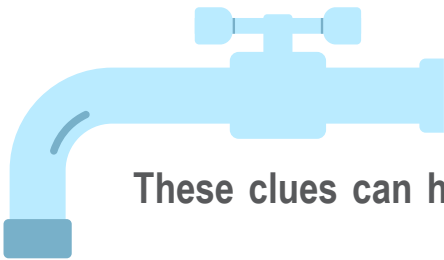
# DETECT AND CHASE DOWN LEAKS

## DID YOU KNOW?

...that easy-to-fix water leaks account for approximately 1 trillion gallons of water wasted each year in U.S. homes? In fact, the average household leaks about 10,000 gallons of water annually. That's equivalent to washing 300 loads of laundry adding an extra 10 percent to your water bills.

In just 10 minutes, you can search your home for leaks and crack down on water waste. Many common household leaks are quick to find and easy to fix. Worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and leaking showerheads are easily fixed which can lower your water bill and save water in your community.

**So put on your detective hat, lace up your running shoes, and take this 10-minute challenge to detect and chase down leaks!**



## START BY GATHERING CLUES

These clues can help before you even begin searching your home for leaks

01

### CHECK YOUR UTILITY BILL

A place to start is to review your water bill. On average a Miami-Dade County family of four uses approximately 20 CCF or 15,000 gallons per month. Is your water use higher this month than it was last month? Has your bill been increasing over time? If your water use increases and you haven't been using more than normal it could be the sign of a leak. Learn more about your water bill at [epa.gov/watersense/understanding-your-water-bill](https://www.epa.gov/watersense/understanding-your-water-bill).

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### READ YOUR WATER METER

Find your water meter, which is usually near the curb in front of your home or at the rear in an alleyway. Use a screwdriver to remove the lid on your meter, which is heavy and usually marked "water."

Now that you've found the meter, take a reading during a period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read the same after two hours, you probably have a leak. Here's a tip on how to read a water meter: [miamidade.gov/leakdetection](https://www.miamidade.gov/leakdetection).

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### TAKE A TOILET TEST

Put a few drops of food coloring into the tank at the back of your toilet and let it sit for 20 minutes. If color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak. Make sure to flush afterward to avoid staining and consider replacing your old toilet flapper if it is torn or worn. Pick up free leak detection tablets at any Miami-Dade Water & Sewer Department customer service center; for more information, call Customer Relations at 305-665-7477.

While you're waiting to see if your toilet has a leak, walk around your house with the following checklist to see if you can chase down any other water wasters.

# CHECKLIST

## FOR CHASING DOWN LEAKS

### Here are some of the places leaks may be hiding in your home

Some leaks require a simple fix—a worn toilet flapper, loose pipe connection, or showerhead with stray spray. But you may want to consult a licensed plumber to stop your running toilet, broken sprinklers, water heater drips, or malfunctioning water supply lines. Take a quick inventory of clues to water waste:

#### BATHROOM

- ☐ **Toilets:** Listen for running water and conduct the food coloring test described on page 1
- ☐ **Faucets:** Look and listen for drips after turning off the water
- ☐ **Showerheads:** Look for drips after turning off the water or when the shower is running, look for stray sprays from pipes that can be stopped with tape
- ☐ **Bathtub:** Turn on the tub, then divert the water to the shower and see if there's still water coming from the tub spout. This could mean the tub spout diverter needs replacing
- ☐ **Sink:** Under the sink check for water pooling under pipes and rust around joints and edges

#### LAUNDRY OR UTILITY ROOM

- ☐ **Under the sink:** Check for pooling water under pipe connections
- ☐ **Clothes washer:** Check for pooling water, which could indicate a supply line leak
- ☐ **Water heater:** Check beneath the tank for pooling water, rust, or other signs of leakage

#### KITCHEN

- ☐ **Faucet:** Look and listen for drips and tighten aerators or replace fixture if necessary
- ☐ **Sprayer:** Check to make sure water is spraying smoothly and clean openings as needed
- ☐ **Under the sink:** Check for pooling water under pipes and rust around joints and edges
- ☐ **Appliances:** Check for pooling water underneath dishwashers and refrigerators with ice makers, which could indicate a supply line leak

#### OUTSIDE

- ☐ **At the spigot:** Ensure tight connections with the hose and see if the hose washer needs replacing. Install an automatic shut off nozzle.
- ☐ **In-ground irrigation system:** Check for broken sprinkler heads or nozzles spraying in the wrong direction. Receive a free landscape assessment from Miami-Dade County!

Learn more at [miamidade.gov/waterwisely](https://miamidade.gov/waterwisely).

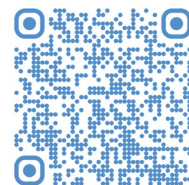
#### THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE

Check for signs of moisture or mold on your walls, ceilings, or floors. This could indicate that a pipe is wreaking havoc behind the scenes and requires the attention of a professional.

If any of your fixtures needs replacing, remember to look for the WaterSense label when purchasing plumbing products (i.e. faucets, showerheads, toilets). Miami-Dade County offers rebates for the purchase of these products. Visit [miamidade.gov/betterbathroom](https://miamidade.gov/betterbathroom) to

learn more. WaterSense products are independently certified to use at least 20 percent less water and perform as well or better than standard models.

For more information on detecting and repairing leaks visit [miamidade.gov/leakdetection](https://miamidade.gov/leakdetection).



**Special thanks to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for providing the content of this guide!**