

Leaky toilets are the #1 cause of high water bill complaints!

A leaky toilet can waste upwards of 300 USG (or approximately 1 cubic metre, or 1,000 litres) of water EVERY DAY! Over a 90 day billing period, that leakage can total 90 cubic metres, and result in an extra \$200 in water and wastewater charges on your bill!

Most people are familiar with obvious leaks - we all know that annoying sound of a toilet running after you've flushed. And we're equally familiar with the tedious job of jiggling the toilet handle to get it to stop running. These problems are not to be ignored! They're serious water wasters and should be fixed as soon as possible so you can put a stop to water and money waste. So, if your toilet exhibits any of these symptoms, call a plumber or put on your work hat to fix the problem:

- *Jiggle the flush handle to get the toilet to stop running*
- *Hear sounds coming from a toilet that is not being used*
- *Hold the handle down to completely empty the tank*

While obvious leaks are fairly easy to detect and repair, it is the silent leaks that are the culprit in the majority of high water bill complaints. Usually, leaks flow quietly into the overflow pipe or occur at the plunger-ball (also known as the tank stopper or flapper), where a slight amount of scale, corrosion, or even a grain of sand can cause leakage. Try the following methods to uncover leaks you might not otherwise see or hear, but which can be tremendous water-wasters over time and cause you to receive a high water bill.

The dye test:

1. Dry all exterior surfaces of the toilet (around the base of the bowl, the underside of the tank, and the floor around the base).
2. Remove the tank lid and flush the toilet.
3. Allow the tank to fill and add the attached toilet dye strips to the tank (If you don't have any dye sticks left, use about a teaspoon of food colouring (a dark colour, such as red or green works best).

NOTE – if you use toilet tank tablets, or dispensers in your tank or bowl which turn the water blue or green, or bleach tablets that would remove the colour from the water, you will need to remove the dispenser from your tank to do this test.

4. Do not flush the toilet.
5. After 30 to 60 minutes, check the bowl for traces of the dye.
6. If you see colour, your toilet is leaking and one of the mechanisms inside needs to be replaced or adjusted. Flush the toilet when the test is completed, as the food dye could stain the tank and/or bowl.
7. If you don't see any colour, flush the toilet and let the water stand in the bowl for another 30-60 minutes – and do a paper towel test (see below)

The paper towel test:

1. After letting the coloured water sit in the bowl, run a dry paper towel around the exterior of all parts of the toilet. If any trace of colour appears on the paper towel, you know you have a leak.

Pencil line test:

Another easy detection test is to note the water level in the tank after flushing by making a pencil mark at the water line. After a few minutes, check the level. If it has dropped, you have a leak.

In addition to leaky toilets, there are many other possible sources of water leaks that can cause high water bills. You can visually check your taps for drips, under your sinks for pooling water, around your appliances for dampness and don't forget your outside hose bibs or outside water lines (i.e. to your garden) as well! There are also ice makers, hot water tanks, "Sump Buddies", continuous pet feeders, water-cooled air conditioners or heat pumps to consider.

Still not convinced you have found the source of your high water bill? Feel free to contact the Public Works Yard for assistance at 905-835-5079.

Water Bill Inquiries:

City Hall 905-835-2900

Water Meter Inquiries

Public Works Yard 905-835-5079