



## Look for the Leak

**What to do:** Indoor leaks usually create obvious signs. Look for water stains on walls or ceilings or a puddle on the floor. Also listen to toilets—a worn-out flapper on the flush valve creates a hiss and is a common cause of slow, constant water flow.

Outdoor leaks usually seep into the ground and can go on for years without being noticed. If your water meter is outside the house (warm climates only), the first step is to check the water line between the house and the meter. Shut off the main water valve at the house and check the meter. If it's still registering water flow, you know there's a leak between the meter and the house. Fixing this problem will likely require some excavation.

A leaking water spigot may go unnoticed if a hose is attached that runs out into the yard or garden. If you find one that keeps dribbling water, a new valve seat washer is probably the solution. If the spigot leaks at the top near the handle, replace the packing nut washer. Read more about [how to fix a leaky faucet](#).

Irrigation systems are another cause of hidden leaks. Check for irrigation leaks by shutting off the valve in the house that feeds the irrigation system. If the meter stops spinning, you've found the problem. Narrow the search even more by looking for wet spots in the yard or areas of grass that are especially green. A malfunctioning zone valve is usually the cause.

Inspect the spigots (top left). Disconnect all the hoses and make sure the spigots aren't leaking.

Check your sprinkler system (top right). A malfunctioning irrigation valve will allow water to continue to dribble out into the yard.

Check the line between the meter and the house (bottom). If the main valve at the house is turned off and the meter is still spinning, you know the leak is between the meter and the house.