Fix a Leak Week Begins March 16
Household Leaks are More than a Drop in the Bucket, Local Water Providers Say

SACRAMENTO—Tiny drips can add up quick. That’s the message from Sacramento-area water providers as they urge local residents to fix common household leaks in honor of national “Fix a Leak Week.”

“We know through research that it’s easy for people to ignore those annoying little faucet and shower drips and to postpone fixing them,” said Regional Water Authority Water Efficiency Program Manager Amy Talbot. “But, it’s important to remember that all of those little drips can quickly add up and that fixing leaks is often easier than you think.”

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 10 percent of homes have leaks that can waste 90 gallons or more per day—enough to fill 1,440 glasses of water. Household leaks not only can waste a tremendous amount of water, they also can damage your home and garden.

A leaking or running toilet is the most common type of leak found inside homes followed by dripping faucets and showerheads, Talbot said. Outdoor leaks can be easy to miss but shouldn’t be ignored because the water wasted can be significant.

“While it’s important to fix leaks throughout the year, we’re inviting everyone to feel that extra boost of motivation during Fix a Leak Week,” she said. Consider these leak facts and tips (and be sure to consult a professional plumber if in doubt):

Leaking toilets can waste 200 gallons of water per day (enough to wash seven loads of laundry every day for a month). Chances are if you can hear your toilet running you have an issue. Confirming a leak is simple: Add a little food coloring or a dye tab to the tank and wait about 15 minutes. If there is colored water in the bowl, you have a leak. The cause is often a worn out toilet flapper, which can break down over time. Turn off the water to your toilet and replace your old flapper with the same or a universal model, typically found at a home improvement store.

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A faucet leaking one drip per second can waste nearly 58 gallons per week (enough to wash nearly 15 loads of dishes in your dishwasher), while a showerhead leaking 10 drips per minute can waste nearly 10 gallons per week (enough for over 150 glasses of water). Faucet and showerhead leaks are typically caused by worn-out washers or loose connections. Turn off the water to the problem area, check washers for wear and replace them if necessary. Be sure to create a tight connection using pipe tape and a wrench, if needed.

A small leak in your sprinkler system can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month (enough for over seven loads of laundry every day for a month). The most common outdoor leaks are caused by broken or loose pipes under your lawn or garden, broken sprinkler heads or loose connection between your garden hose and spigot. When tending to your lawn or garden, keep an eye out for usual wet or soft spots that can indicate a broken pipe or loose connection, check your sprinklers once a month and replace any broken nozzles and regularly check and tighten your garden hose’s connection to the spigot using pipe tape and a wrench, if needed.

You can find more resources and links to “how to” videos for finding and fixing leaks at BeWaterSmart.info.

The Regional Water Authority (RWA) is a joint powers authority representing 21 water providers serving 2 million people in the greater Sacramento region. Formed in 2001, its primary mission is to help its members protect and enhance the reliability, availability, affordability and quality of water resources. Learn more at rwah2o.org.

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