

Is Your Toilet Leaking?

A leaking toilet can silently lose up to 300 litres of water per day. And this total can increase greatly if the leak is bad enough that you can hear your toilet run on its own every so often. Leaks have cost local homeowners hundreds of dollars in a month.

To check if your toilet is leaking, you can use the dye tabs provided by the Region of Waterloo, or basic food coloring. Here are the steps:

1. Lift the lid on the tank of your toilet and place the dye strip or food coloring into the water in the tank.
2. Wait 20 minutes and then check the water in the bowl of your toilet. If you see any of the blue dye in the bowl, you have a leak.
3. Evaluate your options.

The first step is to check the water level in your tank. If the level is too high, water can leak into the overflow pipe. If this is happening, adjust the float rod and turn the screw clockwise to lower the water level $\frac{1}{4}$ inch below the overflow pipe.

If the water level is too low, this indicates a leak elsewhere in the mechanism.

The most common source of toilet leaks is the flapper valve that opens to allow water to flow from the tank to the bowl when you flush the toilet. This is a very simple and easy fix. Here are the steps:

1. Turn off your water supply valve and flush your toilet to empty the tank.
2. Check if the rubber is peeling on the flapper as it can erode over time and also check to see if the chain is kinked, as this can cause it to not close properly.
3. Check to see if there is calcium build-up on your flapper.

Trouble-shooting:

1. If the rubber is peeling or eroded, take your flapper with you to a hardware or plumbing store to match it with the proper replacement. It is critical to make sure you purchase the correct flapper for your toilet. A general, one-size-fits-all flapper is not the correct way to fix the problem as it may still allow a tiny passage for water to leak.
2. If the chain is kinked, simply remove the kink.
3. If there is a calcium build-up, clean your flapper and re-install it.

If none of these problems exist, consult a plumber or local plumbing retailer to discuss other possible solutions.