
“THE PUDDLE”

THE NORTH KINGSTOWN DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY NEWSLETTER

March 2009



Every Drop Counts

More than 1 trillion gallons of water are wasted in U.S. homes each year from easy-to-fix leaks. That's why the North Kingstown Water Department is participating in Fix a Leak Week, March 16 to 20, 2009, and we encourage you to join us.

Sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) WaterSense® program, this week is an opportunity to improve the water efficiency of your homes by checking for and fixing leaks, which waste an average of 11,000 gallons of water per home each year.

What Is Fix a Leak Week?

March 16 to 20, 2009, marks the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense® program's first "Fix a Leak Week," a time to remind Americans to check their household plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems for leaks.

The Facts on Leaks:

- Leaks account for, on average, 11,000 gallons of water wasted in the home every year, which is enough to fill a backyard swimming pool.
- The amount of water leaked from U.S. homes could exceed more than 1 trillion gallons per year. That's equivalent to the annual water use of Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami combined.
- Ten percent of homes have leaks that waste 90 gallons or more per day.
- Common types of leaks found in the home include leaking toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and other leaking valves. All are easily correctable.
- Fixing easily corrected household water leaks can save homeowners more than 10 percent on their water bills.
- Keep your home leak-free by repairing dripping faucets, toilet valves, and showerheads. In most cases, fixture replacement parts don't require a major investment and can be installed by do-it-yourselfers.
- The vast majority of leaks can be eliminated after retrofitting a household with new WaterSense labeled fixtures and other high-efficiency appliances.

Leak Detection:

- Check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, you probably have a leak.
- One way to find out if you have a toilet leak is to place a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank. If the color shows up in the bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Make sure to flush immediately after this experiment to avoid staining the tank.

Faucets and Showerheads:

- A leaky faucet that drips at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons per year. A home with WaterSense labeled toilets could use that water to flush for six months!
- Leaky faucets can be reduced by checking faucet washers and gaskets for wear and replacing them if necessary. If you are replacing a faucet, look for the WaterSense label.
- A showerhead leaking at 10 drips per minute wastes more than 500 gallons per year. That's enough water to wash 60 loads of dishes in your dishwasher.

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Toilets:

- 💧 If your toilet is running constantly, you could be wasting 200 gallons of water or more every day.
- 💧 If your toilet is leaking, the cause is most often an old, faulty toilet flapper. Over time, this inexpensive rubber part decays, or minerals build up on it. It's usually best to replace the whole rubber flapper—a relatively easy, inexpensive do-it-yourself project that pays for itself in no time.
- 💧 If you do need to replace the entire toilet, look for a WaterSense labeled model. If a family of four replaces its older, inefficient toilets with new WaterSense labeled ones, it could save more than 16,000 gallons per year. Retrofitting the house could save the family approximately \$2,000 in water and wastewater bills over the lifetime of the toilets.

Outdoors:

- 💧 An irrigation system should be checked each spring before use to make sure it was not damaged by frost or freezing.
- 💧 An irrigation system with pressure set at 60 pounds per square inch that has a leak 1/32nd of an inch in diameter (about the thickness of a dime) can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month.
- 💧 To ensure that your in-ground irrigation system is not leaking water, consult with a WaterSense irrigation partner who has passed a certification program focused on water efficiency; visit www.epa.gov/watersense for a complete list of irrigation partners.
- 💧 Check your garden hose for leaks at its connection to the spigot. If it leaks while you run your hose, replace the nylon or rubber hose washer and ensure a tight connection to the spigot using pipe tape and a wrench.

About EPA's WaterSense Program

WaterSense is a partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Its mission is to protect the future of our nation's water supply by promoting and enhancing the market for water-efficient products and services. Currently, there are more than 250 WaterSense labeled toilets, 700 labeled faucets and faucet accessories, and more than 600 certified irrigation partners. WaterSense labeled products must achieve independent, third-party testing and certification to prove they meet EPA's rigorous criteria for efficiency and performance.

For more information, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

WHY DO YOU KEEP SENDING THESE &\$?!% CARDS???

Thanks to all of you who have responded to the reminder cards and complied with the Town's Wastewater Management Ordinance. Compliance is on the rise. Many of you have stopped by our office to express your views or question the reasoning of such a program - some indicating that they haven't pumped their system in 30+ years!! Without proper operation and maintenance, septic systems (and even more so - cesspools, which are considered substandard systems) are prone to failure. **Please keep in mind that the wastewater that enters your septic system ultimately discharges to either the aquifer that provides our drinking water or the coastal water bodies that make North Kingstown the wonderful community that it is.** Additional information about North Kingstown's wastewater management program is available at www.northkingstown.org