



Finding Leaks

**CITY OF
KERMAN**

Water Conservation
559-846-9372
www.cityofkerman.net



Where to Start:

Hot Water Tanks

1. **Check the Pressure Relief Valve on the hot water tank.** Sometimes these valves are plumbed directly into a drain and may be leaking without your knowledge. If you can't remove the drain pipe to check for a leak, listen for a hissing sound which may confirm it is leaking

Toilets

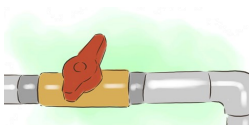
1. **Check the toilet for leaks by removing the top off the tank and listening very closely.** If you hear any hissing at all, try to locate where it is coming from. If you locate the area where the leak is coming from, assess it and determine if you can fix it. If you can't, then call a plumber
 - If nothing is noticeable, get some food coloring and put a couple of drops in the tank (not the bowl). Wait several minutes and if you have coloring in the bowl, you have a leak in the flap-per at the bottom of the tank that is allowing water to seep through. At this point you can assess if you want to do the repair yourself, or call a plumber.
 - If you have more toilets, go ahead and repeat the process with each toilet to make sure you don't have more than one problem



Meter Line

1. If the toilets are fine, check the line running from the meter to the house. While this may sound difficult, you can save money if *you* can locate the leak for the plumber.

- If you know you have a shut-off valve by the house, shut it off temporarily and check the meter by removing the lid and watching the dial on top of the meter.



- If you can't see the meter head, try digging around because they sometimes have dirt or grass covering the top. Once you locate it, and the valve is turned off by the house, watch the meter to see if it is turning. If it is still turning, then the leak is between the meter and the house. If the meter box is full of water and you see a leak there, you may want to call the Water Department to have them take a look.



- At this point, walk the area between the meter and the shut-off valve. Look for signs of a leak such as: soft muddy areas, grass that is greener than the rest or growing much faster than other areas. If you see such an obvious sign, call the plumber or assess if you can make a repair yourself.

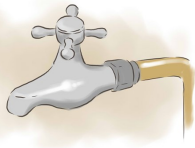


2. If you have the valve shut off at the house and the meter has stopped moving, then the leak is somewhere in the house. Try some other techniques to locate the problem.

Hose Bibs

1. Try to locate a leak by the house.

This will require you to locate all the hose-bibs (hose-bibs are the pipes that you hook your hoses to, in case you were unsure!). Usually an average residence has one hose-bib in the front and one in the back, but be sure to find every one that you have and listen carefully



- Once you have located them, take a screwdriver, preferably one long enough to give yourself room to work, and put the metal tip of the screwdriver directly on the metal part of the hose-bib. Put your thumb knuckle on the top of the screwdriver, and then place your knuckle on the side of your head, immediately in front of your ear. The sound will travel directly to your eardrum. The idea is for the solid screwdriver to work like a stethoscope. This works for most metal valves as well.
- Listen carefully for any sound emitting from the hose-bib. If you hear anything at all, remember where it is (perhaps mark it with chalk), and go to the next one. If the sound emitted gets louder at any of the other hose-bibs, then the leak is closer to that particular unit. Note that and contact your plumber: Giving the plumber this information will save the plumber loads of time in finding the leak, which in turn saves you money.
- If you survey all the hose-bibs and still find no sound, go into the house and follow the same process with the screwdriver on your house fittings such as faucets in sinks, shower valves, washer, hot water heater (be careful to avoid being scalded when working around the water heater). If you are still not sure, just contact the plumber.

Don't Forget to Check...

1. **Check the garden.** Look at hoses, taps and drip irrigation systems

2. **Check the shower head for leaks.** It should be a fairly straightforward home repair if this is a source of leaking.



3. **If you have a swimming pool, it is important to check the filler valve for leaks.** You can check the float to make sure it is working properly, and check the valve at the same time. Turn the water off to the pool. After making any repairs, check your meter to make sure the indicator only spins while the pool is filling.



4. **Recognize that in many cases a leak can be very hard to locate.** Not all of the leaks mentioned in this article can be located and if you're not used to plumbing positioning, you may easily miss something. If you try these steps, you should be able to find an *approximate location* and this is a most valuable exercise in itself because it will help the plumber by saving him time, and that translates into savings for you.

Who will fix it?

The City will fix any leaks from our main in the street up to the meter ONLY. Any leaks after the meter are the homeowner's responsibility to repair. If you are having trouble with the repair, you may need to contact a plumber. If the leak is in your house, you can usually shut off your water at the gate valve or house valve by your front faucet. If it's in your front yard, it will have to be turned off at the meter by city personnel and they can be reached at 559-846-9343, Option 1. Back yard leaks can sometimes be shut off at gate valve to allow repairs to be made. Irrigation leaks can usually be shut off by closing the irrigation valve.



Get to know your meter!

Your water meter is your best ally in finding leaks. Any time water flows through the meter the small red wheel will rotate. This is a visual clue that there may be a leak in your system.

You can watch your meter to see how much water you are using. Each time the red sweep hand completes a full circle you have used 10 gallons of water, which will cause the number to **change** by 10 gallons. If you check your meter before and after taking a shower, you can see how much water you have used! This can help you to manage your usage wisely.

Contact Us

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