

How to check a toilet for leaks

In toilets with tanks, the flapper at the bottom of the tank is one of the most common places for water leaks in homes and businesses.

To check a toilet for leaks:

- put food dye in the toilet tank, and
- wait about 15 to 20 minutes without flushing.
- If the dye appears in the toilet bowl, the flapper is probably leaking and it should be replaced.

If you do not have food dye or you want to check a toilet without a tank, watch for ripples in the toilet bowl indicating a leak, and listen for running water.

A leaking flapper can waste as much as 100,000 gallons or more in one month. (Residential water use in our community averages about 5,000 gallons per month.)

If you do not know how to replace the flapper, we recommend that you contact a licensed plumber or other knowledgeable person. An incorrect flapper installation may result in more water loss. Also, a plumber or other knowledgeable person can determine whether the flapper needs to be replaced, whether the “seat” that the flapper valve rests needs to be worked on, etc.

When you fix or have someone else fix a leak in your plumbing system, please contact OWASA Customer Service at 919-537-4343 or webmaster@owasa.org to ask whether we can give you a credit on your account.

You may need to turn off the water service by using your master shut-off valve until the leak is repaired by a plumber or other qualified person. It is to your advantage to repair all leaks and drips as soon as possible.

Fill valves may also malfunction and leak water. A malfunctioning fill valve in your toilet tank can also cause water to leak into the toilet bowl. If the fill valve fails, you may see water going down the “overflow tube” inside the tank.