



## **TESTING A TOILET FOR LEAKS**

Leaking toilets are the most common cause of high water bills. Nine out of ten complaints about high water bills can be traced to leaking toilets. People tend to repair drippy faucets because the drips are visible and annoying. It's easier to overlook the leaking toilet. We have had customers with a \$500.00 increase for two months because of one leaking toilet.

There are a number of signs that a toilet needs some repairs, but many toilets leak without visible indications of trouble. Here are some of the obvious signs of a leaking toilet:

- If you have to jiggle the handle to make a toilet stop running.
- If there are any sounds coming from a toilet that is not being used.
- If you have to hold the handle down to allow the tank to empty.
- If you can see water trickling down the sides of the toilet bowl long after it's been flushed.
- If water drips out of the refill tube into the overflow pipe.
- If a toilet turns the water on for 15 seconds or so without you touching the handle (otherwise known as phantom flushing).
- If you see water running over the top of the overflow, you definitely have a leaking refill valve. If you are unsure whether or not water is running over the top of the overflow pipe, sprinkle talcum powder on top of the water in the tank, and you can clearly see whether or not it is.

### **THE DYE TEST**

However, even if your toilet doesn't have these symptoms, it's still possible that it is leaking. These leaks are known as silent leaks, because they usually go undetected. There is an easy test you can do that will positively tell you whether or not your toilet is leaking. And if the test shows that the toilet is leaking, there is a second test that tells you what part inside the tank is responsible and needs fixing.

- Remove the cover on the toilet tank and carefully set it aside so it can't be knocked over and cracked.
- Remove any bowl cleaners that color the water and begin the test with clear water in the tank as well as in the bowl.
- Get some dye, food coloring or cold black coffee work fine. Put enough dye in the tank water to give the water a deep color.
- Wait 30 minutes and make sure nobody uses the toilet.
- Check the bowl after 30 minutes. If you find any of the dyed water in the toilet bowl, your toilet is leaking. A properly operating toilet will store water in the tank indefinitely without any water running into the bowl.

If you have found that your toilet is leaking there is a simple test to see if the flush valve or the refill valve is causing the leak.

- Draw a pencil line on the back wall of the tank on the inside of the tank at the waterline.
- Turn the water supply off, either under the tank or at the main shutoff.
- Wait 30 minutes. If the water level remains at the pencil mark then the leak is occurring at the REFILL VALVE, the unit in the left side of the tank.
- If the water level falls below the pencil mark, the leak is in the FLUSH VALVE, the unit located in the center of the tank.