

## HOW TO DETERMINE IF YOU HAVE A WATER LEAK

*The best method for determining whether a leak exists is to take actual water meter readings.* This method checks the entire internal plumbing system in your home or business for water leaks. Take a water meter reading just before going to bed or some other time when no one will be using water for several hours. Take another meter reading in the morning before any water is used or after a few hours of no use. In theory, the two readings should be the same. If they are not and you cannot account for the use by a humidifier, ice cube maker, toilet flush, or water softener, you have a leak. At this point, further investigation is needed.

### TESTING TOILETS FOR LEAKS

From our experience, 90 percent of the leaks in residential plumbing systems are found at the toilet tank. Malfunctioning water softeners and humidifiers run a distant second and third. We encourage you to check for a leak. Be sure to check *all* the toilets in the home. Toilets usually leak at the bottom of the tank around the flapper plug or at the top the tank at the overflow tube.

#### Testing the Flapper Plug

To test the flapper plug, carefully remove the lid from the toilet tank and mark the water level in the toilet tank with a pencil. Shut off the water supply to the toilet. If the water remains on the mark you made for 10 minutes, the flapper plug is not leaking. If the water level drops below the mark you made, the flapper plug is leaking and should be repaired or replaced.

#### Testing the Overflow Tube

The water level in the toilet tank should be at least 1 inch below the top of the overflow tube. If the water level in the toilet tank is at the top of the overflow tube, that is where the leak may be occurring. The float that controls the water level in the tank should be adjusted so that the water level in the tank is at least 1 inch below the top of the tube.

Toilet tank leaks typically result from worn parts or misalignment of some part of the flushing mechanism. Most repairs can be done by an experienced “do-it-yourselfer”. If you are not sure you can handle the job, call a plumber. It is important to stop the leak. Leaks left uncorrected often increase in volume.

Water leaks are costly. Even a small leak, running continuously, can add hundreds of dollars to your water bill. This information is provided as a courtesy, with hopes of action on your part that may minimize an unnecessary waste of water and expense to you.