Are you losing any water through leaky fixtures or pipes inside your home?

In Oregon, the average person uses approximately 100 gallons (13.64 cu ft) per day. That's just over 3,000 gallons (409.27 cu ft) per month. Multiply that by a family of 4 and water usage can easily reach 12,000 gallons (1637.1 cu ft) per month. In addition, your sewer billing is calculated using your winter water consumption so a leak can affect more than just one service billing. How can you reduce the amount of water you use?

Be a leak detector detective

Be on the look out for the obvious leak, the slow leak, and maybe even ask a plumber for help with the hidden leak. Some areas to check for leaks include toilets, faucets, malfunctioning water heaters, outside hose bibs, or faulty irrigation valves. Some leaks can be harder to find such as underground leaks, sprinkler systems, foundations leaks, or leaks behind walls. These may require the assistance of an experienced and licensed plumber to locate. Even small drips can add up to big bucks.

Leaky faucets / fixtures

Drips per Minute	Wasted Water per Month	Wasted Water per Year
10	43 Gallons	526 Gallons
30	130 Gallons	1,577 Gallons
60	259 Gallons	3,153 Gallons
120	518 Gallons	6,307 Gallons
300	1,296 Gallons	15,768 Gallons

Small, continuous leaks will waste large amounts of water. In addition, leaks in hot water lines will waste heat. Keep all valves and faucets tight. When a leak develops, replace faucet washers. If valves or faucets are damaged, replace faucet and valve assembly. Visually inspect the pipes in your home and look for any tell-tale watermarks on walls or ceilings. Be sure to look under each sink in your home and around the floor of the toilet. Also, watch those shower heads; are you using a water-conserving model?

Hot water heaters

Check the pressure relief valve on your hot water heater. Often times, once the relief valve opens, it continues to leak until the valve is replaced. These valves can be dripping on the floor around the hot water heater or may be plumbed outside. If you find a leak, contact a plumber or someone well-versed in this type of repair.

Hose Bibs, In-Ground Irrigation Systems, Hoses

Check the outside hose bibs or any other above ground water line. Signs of an outside leak include a wet spot, actual flow of water over the ground surface or green algae growing in the area. Also, look for any leaks around the valve on the hose bib and backflow preventers. Inspect your irrigation system and be sure there are no missing or broken sprinkler heads. Faulty sprinkler heads can lose in average 20 gallons per minute. Also, pay attention to your hoses. Left unattended, a garden hose can pour out hundreds of gallons of water in an hour.

Check all hoses, connections and spigots regularly to ensure they are in good working order. Replace or repair damaged or leaking hoses, nozzles, spigots, and connectors. Consider outfitting your hose with a spray nozzle to dispense water only as needed. When projects are complete turn water off at the faucet.

Toilets

Toilets are the biggest culprit of high-water usage. Sometimes they continue flowing because the flapper sticks, the chain gets caught, or the parts are wearing out inside the tank. Since the water flows down the sewer, leaking toilets don't necessarily leave any sign of a leak, until you get the bill.

The average leaky toilet can waste about 200 gallons (27.28 cu ft) per day. Some toilets may produce a running water sound that is easy to hear. Some leaks are visible as a small trickle running from the rim of the water in the bowl. Most often, toilet leaks are silent and can be intermittent allowing for a leak to go undetected for long periods of time.

To detect a silent leak, move the lid from the toilet tank, remove any colored or bleaching cleaning agents. Flush to clear the water in the bowl. Then add dye tablets, leak detector fluid, a few drops of food coloring, or colored instant drink mix to the toilet tank. If there is a leak, color will appear in the bowl within 60 minutes. Flush the remaining color from the tank as soon as the test is complete.

For more information on how to conserve water contact:

www.oregon.gov/owrd/pages/water_conservation.aspx

www.oregon.gov/owrd/pages/wr/drought_conservation.aspx

www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/.../ws-ourwater-oregon-state-fact-sheet.pdf

www.conserveh2o.org

www.awwa.org/advocacy/learn

As always, if we can be of any further assistance, please contact the City of Molalla at 503-829-6855.