

SNWA, U.S. EPA unite to promote national Fix a Leak Week, March 20-26

Southern Nevada residents can do their part to conserve the region's most precious natural resource—water—and save their hard-earned money at the same time during national Fix a Leak Week, March 20-26.

The Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense program, is offering tips and ideas on how to avoid costly water leaks which can waste more than 1 trillion gallons nationally—equal to the annual water use of more than 11 million homes.

At first blush a simple leak may not seem especially severe; however, the amount of water lost to household leaks can quickly add up. For example, a faucet leaking at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons per year—roughly the amount of water needed to take more than 180 showers; a showerhead leaking at 10 drips per minute wastes more than 500 gallons per year, or enough water to wash 60 loads of dishes in your dishwasher. Toilets that run constantly can waste more than 200 gallons of water every day.

Faulty landscape irrigation systems and swimming pool automatic fill valves also can waste water and contribute to high water bills. However, fixing these and other easily corrected household water leaks can save homeowners more than 10 percent on their water bills, according to the EPA, and as much as 11,000 gallons of water a year. Simple repairs include replacing a faulty toilet flapper or replacing worn washers and gaskets on leaky faucets.

To help you get a head start on tracking down possible leaks in your home or office, the SNWA offers the following tips to find and eliminate leaks. Remember, locating a leak is a process of elimination.

- **Locate your water meter:** Most water meters are located in the front sidewalk. First, check your water meter for movement. Look at the top of the meter. You'll notice a small, red triangle called a flow indicator. It'll move whenever water is passing through it. If your meter doesn't have a flow indicator, you can use the sweep hand on the register to indicate water loss. If either the flow indicator or the sweep hand is moving, you may have a leak or malfunction.
- **Check your toilets:** Shut off one toilet at a time at the wall. In between each shutoff, go to the water meter and check your flow indicator. If the flow indicator's red triangle is moving, that toilet is not the problem. If the flow indicator stopped moving, that toilet is the culprit.
- **Check your sprinkler system:** Shut off the anti-siphon valve that serves your sprinkler system. Check the flow indicator at the water meter. If it has stopped moving, the sprinkler system is the problem.
- **Check your water softener:** Most softeners have a bypass lever. Turn the lever to allow water to bypass the softener. Check the flow indicator at the meter. If the red triangle is

not moving, you have isolated the leak to your softener. (You also can check for leaking swamp coolers, water-cooled air conditioners and reverse osmosis units by turning the bypass lever on each and checking the meter).

- **Check your main service line:** First, you need to find your water shutoff valve. This is usually in your front yard near the sewer riser cap, in your garage, or near your water softener unit. Shut off the valve, cutting off all water to your home, and go in the house and turn on a faucet to make sure the water is off. Check the flow indicator triangle at the meter. If the red triangle is moving, the leak is between the shutoff valve and the water meter.
- **Now what?** Close the water meter cap and replace the meter box lid. If you are not able to find the leak, call a professional plumber to locate and fix the leak(s). If it's a simple leak like your toilet flapper or kitchen faucet, you may want to fix the problem yourself.

The SNWA has tips and instruction on its website, snwa.com. The SNWA also offers free Indoor Water Audit and Retrofit kits so residents can test their fixtures. To request a kit, call the Conservation Helpline at 258-SAVE (7283).