Water Heater

Detection: A water heater leak is generally indicated by a large amount of water on the floor around the water heater.

Repair: If your water heater is leaking, contact a service technician to determine if the water heater can be repaired or if it must be replaced.

Irrigation System

Detection: Indications of leakage in an irrigation system include overgrown or particularly green areas of turf, soggy areas around spray heads and above ground hoses, jammed spray heads and torn hoses.

Repair: Leaks in an irrigation system can occur in several places. Most leaks occur because a valve fails to shut completely. If you are unsure about the nature of the repair or how to proceed, you may want to contact a professional irrigation system installer or repairman.

Service Line from Meter to Home

Detection: A leak in the service line from the water meter to the home is generally indicated by greener patches of grass in the yard.

Repair: Each individual property owner must take whatever steps he/she deems necessary to fix the plumbing problem on his/her property.

The information provided by the Birmingham Water Works Leak Detectives is general information concerning leaks and is not intended to address individual or specific plumbing issues or questions which should only be addressed by a licensed plumbing professional. Under no circumstances will the Birmingham Water Works, its officers, directors or employees be responsible for (1) the accuracy or inaccuracy of any information contained or omitted herein; (2) any reliance upon such information; or (3) the consequences of any actions based upon information provided herein.

For customer service questions, call (205) 244-4000.
**Toilet**

**Detection:** In a properly functioning toilet, water should only move from the tank to the bowl when the toilet is being flushed. A leaking toilet loses water from the tank to the bowl without flushing. Also, take notice of the water level in the toilet tank. The water level should never reach the top of the overflow tube. If it does, replace the overflow tube to avoid wasting water.

There are two ways to determine if you have a leak:

1. Add a dye tablet or dark food coloring to the toilet tank and wait 15 minutes. Do not flush. If the water in your toilet bowl changes colors, you have a leak.
2. Shut off water to the toilet tank and flush. Once the tank is empty, touch the flapper. If a rubbery residue from the flapper comes off on your hand, you have a leak.

**Repair:** The cause of most toilet leaks is a worn out flapper or ballcock. A new flapper is relatively inexpensive and easy to replace. Flappers can be found at local hardware stores and home improvement stores. **Be sure to bring your old flapper when purchasing a new one.**

**Bathtub Faucets and Showerheads**

**Detection:** Most bathtub leaks are visible by drips coming from the tub spout. Occasionally, bathtub faucets may leak in other places such as the hot and/or cold water handle(s) or in the pipe below the basin. You may have a leak in the piping if there are visible drips coming from the piping or if there are wet, damp areas underneath the sink.

**Repair:** Faucets typically leak because of bad rubber washers, old gaskets or O-rings and corroded valve seats. If you decide to fix the faucet yourself, make sure you bring along the old faucet and parts when visiting the hardware or appliance store. If you don’t feel comfortable repairing the faucet yourself, contact a plumber. If you notice a leak in the piping underneath the sink, visit your local hardware store or contact a plumber.

**Dishwasher**

**Detection:** Most dishwasher leaks are visible by a puddle of water accumulating in front of the appliance.

**Repair:** A leaky dishwasher can occur from using too much soap, having an unlevel unit or having a cracked hose. Contact a plumber or an appliance technician to check the condition of your machine.

**Washing Machine**

**Detection:** Washing machine leaks are fairly common. You may notice water dripping down the outside of the washing machine or a pool of water around your washing machine.

**Repair:** Leaks around a washing machine often mean a loose or broken hose or connection. If the washing machine continues to leak after checking the hose and connection, contact a plumber or an appliance technician. **Never work on a washing machine that is still plugged in.**