



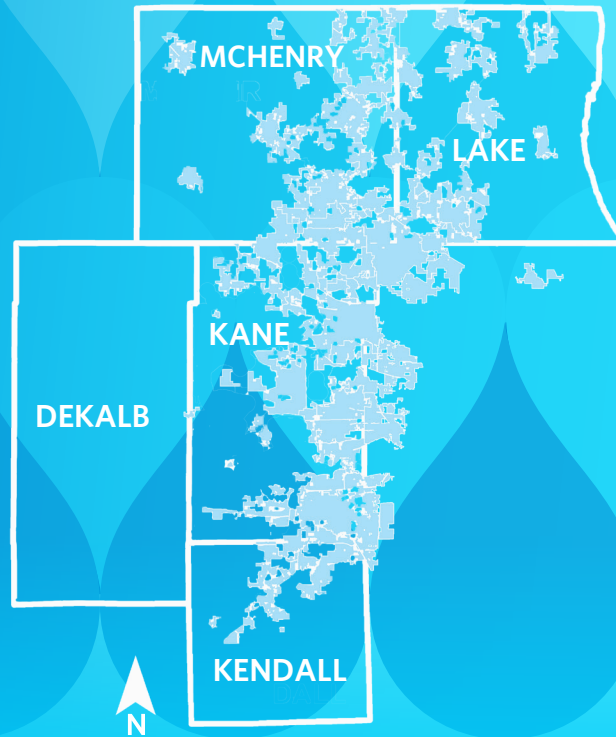
The average household loses over *10,000 gallons* of water per year through leaky plumbing pipes and fixtures. That's enough water for *270 loads* of laundry!

Reducing household water loss in Illinois saves money and protects our limited water resources.

Learn to control your water bill and avoid water waste by taking a few simple steps to detect and repair leaks in the home.

## Regional Water Supply Concerns

Water is a limited resource. NWPA communities rely upon groundwater or the Fox River for their water supply. Overuse can lead to insufficient water supply and poor water quality. Regional water resources could be strained to the point of water shortages and adverse effects on rivers, streams and wetlands by 2050 if action is not taken to lower water usage. It is important to use our water resources efficiently. That means limiting the amount of water we waste in our homes each day to make sure there is enough water in the future.



### Northwest Water Planning Alliance

The NWPA, formed by intergovernmental agreement, seeks to collaboratively plan for and steward our shared river and groundwater resources to ensure a sustainable water supply for the people, economy, environment, and future generations. This group connects roughly 80 communities in DeKalb, Kane, Kendall, Lake, and McHenry Counties. NWPA communities are located predominantly within the Fox River Basin. The Fox River serves as an important source of drinking water to hundreds of thousands of people.

For more information, visit [www.nwpa.us](http://www.nwpa.us)



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# Household Water Efficiency



NORTHWEST  
**WATER PLANNING**  
ALLIANCE



Metropolitan **Planning Council**



## Detect Leaks

The most common types of leaks found in the home include worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and other leaking valves. All are simple to fix and can save homeowners about 10 percent on their water bills.

First, determine whether you're wasting water.

- **Examine your winter water usage.** A family of four uses an average of 10,000 gallons per month. If a household exceeds 12,000 gallons per month, it likely indicates a leak problem.
- **Check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is used.** If the meter reading changes, you probably have a leak.

Next, identify the source(s) of the leak(s).

- **Place a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank.** If any color shows up in the bowl after 15 minutes, you have a leak.
- **Check for surface leaks** by examining faucets, showerheads, and pipe fittings for any water on the outside of the pipe.

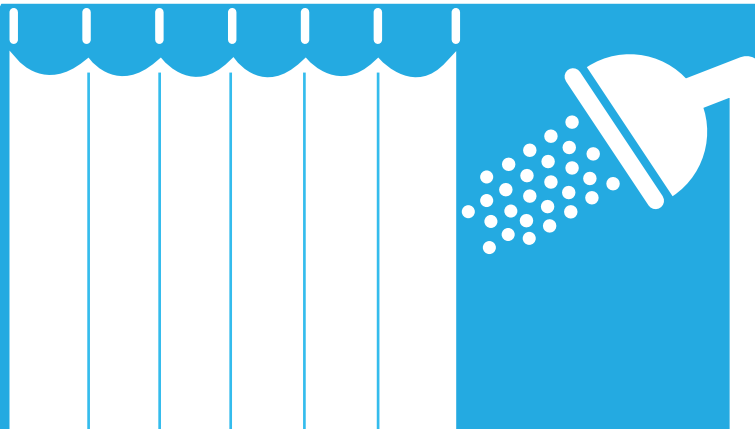


Source: CMAP staff.

## Repair Leaks

In most cases, fixture replacement parts don't require a major investment.

- **Toilets:** A common reason why toilets will leak is an old or worn out toilet flapper. The toilet flapper is the little rubber cap that covers the hole in your toilet tank. Check to make sure that the flapper chain is connected properly. If the flapper is corroded and no longer seals, you should replace it. Flappers are easy to install and cost less than \$10. Fixing a leaky toilet can save anywhere from 50-300 gallons per day.
- **Faucets:** Old and worn faucet washers and gaskets frequently cause leaks in faucets. There are four types of faucets: compression, cartridge (sleeve), ceramic disk, and ball. Consult online tutorials for how to repair leaks for your faucet types. In all cases, use distilled white vinegar to remove mineral deposits on faucet parts. Fixing a leaky faucet can save up to 20 gallons per day.
- **Showerheads:** Leaky showerheads can be fixed by making sure there is a tight connection between the showerhead and the pipe stem and by using pipe tape to secure it. Teflon pipe tape is available at most hardware stores. It's also a good idea to check and, if needed, replace the washer or "o" ring inside the showerhead. Fixing a leaky showerhead can save around 100 gallons per week.



## Did you know...water utilities should check for leaks too?

Evaluating the state of the water supply system each year and repairing leaky water mains can help communities extend the life of their pipes and treatment plants. It also helps planners estimate how much water residents really use and might need in the future. The Northwest Water Planning Alliance encourages all member communities to do annual water system evaluations.



Source: iStockphoto.com.

Don't forget to check for leaks outside. Irrigation systems should be checked each spring before use to make sure that there is no damage caused by the winter freeze. Indications of leakage include overgrown, particularly green, or soggy areas of turf. A leaky system can waste around 6,300 gallons per month.