

Home Improvements

Fix A Leaking Faucet—And Save Some Green— At The Same Time

(NAPSA)—How long have you been ignoring that pitter-patter coming from the shower or jiggling the handle on that running toilet? Well, you may as well be pouring money down the drain. Fixing easily corrected leaks can save homeowners more than 10 percent on water bills, and it's good for the environment.

While leaks may sometimes seem like small problems, they waste valuable resources and money over time. On average, a U.S. household leaks more than 11,000 gallons of water per year—enough to fill a backyard swimming pool. Common leaks, such as dripping faucets and aging toilet flappers, are easily correctable. WaterSense, a partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is encouraging residents to fix household leaks:

- **Be a leak detective.** Take a look at your water usage during a colder month when less water is used outdoors, such as February or March. If a family of four exceeds 12,000 gallons per month, there are probably leaks.

- **Nip that drip.** A leaky faucet that drips at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons per year. Check faucet washers and gaskets for wear and replace if necessary.

- **Get a handle on toilet leaks.** If your toilet is running constantly, you could be wasting nearly 200 gallons of water



every day. The leaking culprit is most often a worn rubber flapper. It's usually best to replace the whole flapper—a do-it-yourself project that pays for itself in no time.

- **Make savings a fixture.** If you discover a significant leak that requires replacing an older toilet or bathroom faucet, consider a new WaterSense-labeled fixture, which will use at least 20 percent less water. To earn EPA's WaterSense label, products must be independently tested and certified to save water and work well.

- **Spring into action.** To ensure that your in-ground irrigation system has not been damaged by frost or freezing, consult with a WaterSense irrigation partner this spring; a complete list of irrigation partners is available at the Web site below.

For more tips and information about how to save water, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

Note to Editors: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense program is promoting March 16 to 20, 2009, as Fix a Leak Week. Additional graphics and information for the week itself are available by contacting the WaterSense Helpline at watersense@epa.gov or (866) WTR-SENS (987-7367).