

## Suggestions for Checking your Toilets for Leaks

This diagram pertains to a fill valve that can be found in many older toilets but there are many other types. Although your valve may look different from this diagram, they basically do the same thing and have similar parts. See the links at the bottom of the page for suggestions for other types of valves.

Usually a leaking or running toilet is due to one of three things:

- 1- A worn or cracked flapper
- 2 - A defective or misadjusted fill valve
- 3 - A problem with the handle, chain or float ball.

1 - To test for a defective flapper first remove the toilet tank cover. Make a pencil mark on the inside of the tank at the water line or place a few drops of food coloring in the tank. Wait 30 to 60 minutes. If the water line has dropped or if there is food coloring in the bowl, the flapper is leaking. It is a simple process to replace. Just disconnect the flapper from the flush valve by popping it off the plastic ears and disconnect the chain from the flapper. Replace with new flapper. (Around \$8 at most hardware or home center stores).

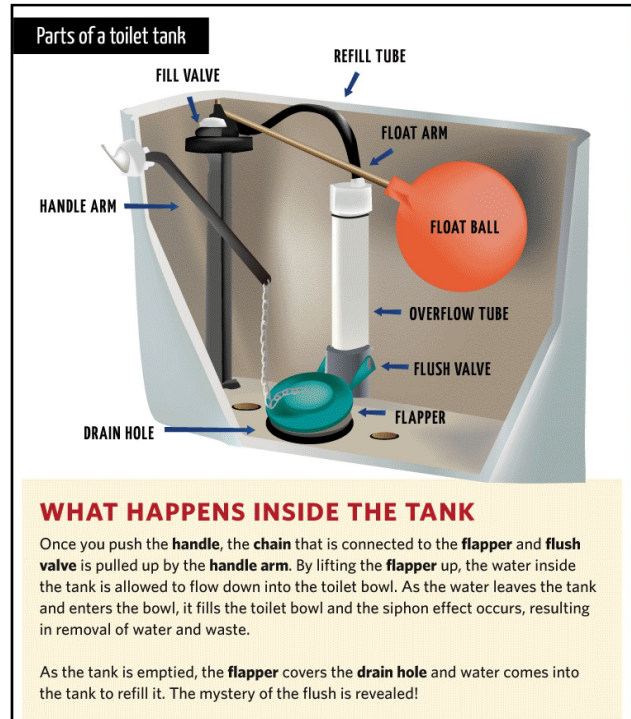
2 - If the fill valve is misadjusted or defective you will probably be able to see and hear the toilet running. With the tank cover off, flush the toilet and observe the fill valve shuts off when the tank has filled. If the water level rises above the top of the overflow tube, the fill valve will not shut off and the toilet will “run.” Pull up slightly on the float arm. If the fill valve shuts off, an adjustment can usually be made to the float with the screw on the top of the fill valve. This screw raises or lowers the float arm and float. Shut off the water to the toilet at the supply valve and flush the toilet to empty the tank. Turn the screw on the top of the fill valve counterclockwise to lower the float. This will shut the valve off earlier which will lower the water level in the tank. Adjust until the level is about ½” below the top of the overflow pipe. If this does not fix the problem you may have to replace the fill valve. See websites below or call a plumber.

3 - Sometimes the chain attached to the flapper kinks or is the wrong length. If it is too short or if it kinks it will prevent the flapper from making a tight seal over the drain hole. If it is too long it might actually fall under the flapper, preventing it from closing. A good length is one that leaves about ½” of slack when the flapper is all the way down. Adjust as necessary by cutting excess chain or replace with an equal length of nylon string or dental floss.

### Read more at:

<http://www.familyhandyman.com/plumbing/toilet-repair/how-to-fix-a-running-toilet/view-all>

<http://www.toiletology.com/troubles.shtml>



## Tips for Locating Water Leaks

Here are some things you can do to check for water leaks in your home. When in doubt, call a plumber.

- 1) **Toilets.** Check the toilet for leaks by removing the top off the tank and listening very closely. If you hear any hissing at all, try to locate where it is coming from. If you locate the area where the leak is coming from, assess it and determine if you can fix it. If you can't, then call a plumber.
  - a) Check out the tips on the back of this page for more details on toilet leaks.
  - b) Repeat the process with each toilet you have to make sure you don't have more than one problem.
- 2) **Hose bibs.** These are the faucets you hook your outside hoses to. Usually an average residence has one hose-bib in the front and one in the back.
  - a) Shut off the valve and remove the hose and look for any obvious leaks.
  - b) Take a screwdriver, preferably one long enough to give yourself room to work, and put the metal tip of the screwdriver directly on the metal part of the hose-bib. Put your thumb knuckle on the top of the screwdriver, and then place your knuckle on the side of your head, immediately in front of your ear. The sound will travel directly to your eardrum. The idea is for the solid screwdriver to work like a stethoscope. This works for most metal valves, as well.
  - c) Listen carefully for any sound emitting from the hose-bib. If you hear anything at all, remember where it is (perhaps mark it with chalk), and go to the next one. If the sound emitted gets louder at any of the other hose-bibs, then the leak is closer to that particular unit. Note that and contact your plumber: Giving the plumber this information will save the plumber loads of time in finding the leak, which in turn saves you money.
- 3) **Faucets.** Inspect the plumbing fixtures in the sink, showers and tubs throughout the home for signs of drips or moisture on the pipes. Follow the same process with the screwdriver on these fixtures.
- 4) **Hot Water Tank.** Check the pressure relief valves on the hot water tank and/or hot water boiler. Sometimes these valves are plumbed directly into a drain and may be leaking without your knowledge. If you can't remove the drain pipe to check for a leak listen for a hissing sound. It may be leaking. This is something that needs a professional so call a plumber if you find a leak here. If there are signs of water but you can't find a leaky pressure relief valve, the tank itself may be leaking. **DON'T DELAY.** Call a professional right away. Tank leaks often start slow and then suddenly burst causing a major flood. The same is true for washing machine supply hoses. If you notice a tiny leak in the hose itself or at the crimped metal fittings at the ends, replace the hose. If the hose bursts it will result in a continuous flow of water.
- 5) **Drains.** You can also have a leak in a drain line (as opposed to a supply line). These types of leaks won't make the water bill go up but they can cause a lot of damage so it's a good idea to routinely check for these types of leaks as well.
  - a) Drain leaks in kitchens and bathrooms usually occur at the actual drain or at the slip joints in the drainpipe. Hidden behind boxes and bottles, these can damage cabinets, flooring and even ceilings below before you notice them. Remove everything from the cabinet under the sink. Look for puddles, water stains or other signs of water damage. Check for loose or damaged flooring in front of the cabinet. Most of these can be fixed with inexpensive parts from the hardware store or home center, but if you are in doubt, call a plumber.

### Read more at:

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_8244724\\_plumbing-leak.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_8244724_plumbing-leak.html) or

<http://www.familyhandyman.com/plumbing/repair/find-and-repair-hidden-plumbing-leaks/view-all>