

Now's the time to check for household leaks

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Here it is, late August already! Where did the summer go? The DRIP message this year has emphasized smart water use. By being smart about water use, you not only save valuable, precious resources but you also save money. What a great win-win proposition! Speaking of being smart, it's smart to check your home seasonally for water wasters or leaks that may have developed over the past few months.

Indoors

- Check your sink and tub faucets for drips. While they may appear small and insignificant, they can actually waste hundreds of gallons of water a month, which often translates to thousands of gallons annually.
- Check your toilets for leaks resulting from worn flapper valves and overflow floats positioned incorrectly. Placing a few drops of food coloring in the tank will let you see if there is a leak between the tank and bowl. If the water in the toilet bowl changes color, you have a leak that is costing money.
- Check your low-flow shower heads for mineral scale deposits and build-up. The shower head can be cleaned with a weak vinegar solution to remove the build-up. Although this doesn't waste water, it does affect the performance of your showerhead.
- Check your freezer temperature to make sure the automatic ice maker is functioning efficiently. A block of ice in the ice bin is a sure indicator that the maker is not functioning as designed.

Outdoors

- Check your evaporative (swamp) cooler for overflow leaks. If you can see water running down the roof from the swamp cooler, check the cooler pan for rusted-out areas. You may only need to readjust the overflow drain and fill float to stop the overflow. However, be aware that some of the newer models and brands are designed to continually spill water. You still can minimize this by adjusting the overflow.
- Check your lawn sprinkler filter system on a regular basis. Clean filters permit your system to work efficiently and effectively, as they were designed.

Remember, some spray heads have individual filters inside which can also clog.

By performing these late-summer household water leak checks you are doing your part to help conserve one of our valued Western Colorado resources – water!

We live in a semiarid climate where droughts will always be a part of our environment. Water for our future means conserving now. The Drought Response Information Project (DRIP) is a collaboration between the valley's domestic water utilities and CSU Cooperative Extension to provide information and educate the public about drought and the importance of water conservation.