

Other Problems

While some toilet repairs are easy, others may be more complicated. Know your limitations – call a reputable plumber if you have any concerns about how to make a repair. Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District is *not* responsible for any damage to your home or toilet because of faulty repairs.



Call 811 before you dig! This is a free service to locate underground utilities. The service will coordinate and notify applicable underground utilities to come out and locate their utility lines so they are marked before digging. More information can be found at their web site www.call811.com.



LAKE WHATCOM WATER
& SEWER DISTRICT

1220 LAKEWAY DRIVE
BELLINGHAM, WA 98229

Phone: 360-734-9224
Fax: 360-738-8250
Email: general.inbox@lwwsd.org

Revised 02-06-2012

LAKE WHATCOM WATER
& SEWER DISTRICT

LEAKY
TOILET?



Yes, you can fix it!

Toilets consume approximately 26% of all water in the average home. They are also one of the likeliest places to find a leak that may waste thousands of gallons per month. In the District, leaks not only stress the drinking water system, but they also send clean water into the wastewater treatment plant. You can reduce your impact on the environment, and save money and water, by repairing some leaks yourself.

Step 1: Find the Leak

It can be easy to determine if your toilet is leaking. Maybe you hear the sound of water running, or a faint trickling or hissing. Many times, though, *water will flow through the tank silently*, and this is



often why toilet leaks are overlooked. To test your toilet, lift the lid off the toilet tank and drop a Leak Detection Dye Tablet, available at local hardware stores, into the tank. If you do not have a Leak Detection Dye Tablet, several drops of food coloring dropped into the tank are just as good. Do not flush. Wait at least 10 minutes and check the bowl of the toilet. If there is dye in the bowl, the toilet has a leak.

Step 2: Gather Tools

To repair the leak, tools to have handy are

- An adjustable crescent wrench
- A hand towel
- Replacement flapper valve (flapper)

Step 3: Check the Chain

If you have to jiggle the handle to keep the toilet from running, it may be a misaligned flapper valve(2), a loose handle(9), or an incorrect length of chain(4).

To **fix**: Clean and adjust the chain(4). Make sure the chain isn't too long or short. Tighten the nut holding the toilet handle to the tank. If that doesn't work, the handle may have to be replaced.

Step 4: Check the Flapper

The flapper valve may not be sitting properly on the valve seat(3), or it may need to be replaced. Over time, the rubber material of the flapper deteriorates. If you gently rub the flapper and get streaks on your fingers, it should be replaced now.

To **fix**: Drain the toilet tank. Close the water inlet shut-off valve to turn it off(1). Flush the toilet to drain the tank. Check the valve seat(3) for corrosion and clean it if necessary. Check the flapper valve(2) to ensure it is lining up properly with the valve seat. If needed, replacement flappers can easily be purchased at hardware stores and some large grocery stores. Follow the instructions on the flapper valve packaging. After installing the new flapper valve, open the water inlet shut-off valve(1) and flush to test.

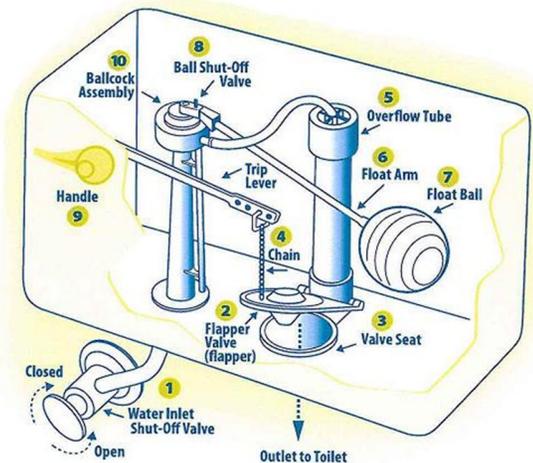
Step 5: Check the Overflow Tube

If the water level in the tank is too high, it may continuously spill into the overflow tube(5), creating a large leak. The correct water level is about

one-half to one inch below the top of the overflow tube.

To **fix**: Bend the float arm(6) gently downward. Flush after bending the arm to test whether the water stops at the proper level. Be sure to check that the float arm is screwed in securely so that it will not rotate.

*If the water level is too low, there may not be an efficient flush. If that is the case, carefully bend the float arm upward. You may need to replace the float ball(7) if it has filled with water, or replace the ball shut-off valve(8).



Images courtesy of City of Portland

LAKE WHATCOM WATER & SEWER DISTRICT

1220 Lakeway Drive
Bellingham, WA 98229
Phone: 360-734-9224
Fax: 360-738-8250
Email: general.inbox@lwwsd.org