

Irrigation Systems Leak Detection

Leaks in an irrigation system can occur in several places. Most leaks occur because a valve fails to shut completely, but leaks in system pipes are not unheard of. Broken heads, while not technically a “leak”, waste water when the system is operating.

Indications of leakage include overgrown or particularly green areas of turf, soggy areas around spray heads and aboveground hoses, jammed spray heads, and torn hoses. In drip systems, leakage problems may be the result of tubing or tape that have been damaged by foot traffic of gnawing and chewing animals.

To detect a leak in your irrigation system, you must shut down all water use inside your home and be fairly certain that there is no leakage occurring indoors. Once you have done this, you can use your water meter to see if any water continues to flow into your system.

Irrigation system leaks can vary in size and intensity depending on the location and water pressure. If your system develops a large leak in a pipe or valve, you will probably find out about it fairly quickly. Your lawn will be soggy; the ground around the leaking pipe will be soft and muddy.

Small and slow leaks are much more difficult to detect and pinpoint. You will probably need to use the low flow leak detector wheel on your water meter to determine if any water is flowing. If you do have a slow leak, tracking it down within your sprinkler system may also take some effort. A leaking valve will often result in a flooded valve box or at least a very wet valve box. A slow leak in a piece of pipe may require the services of a professional leak detection firm to locate.

To check for leaks follow these steps:

Turn off all water taps inside and outside your home. Record the meter reading and return in two to three hours to check for movement. If the meter reading has changed, you may have a leak.

OR

Many meters have a small red (or blue) triangle on the meter face, designed to detect even small leaks. If this red triangle is moving when you have all water off inside and outside your home, you may have a leak.