



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Release: Immediate
Date: March 13, 2009

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NORTH CAROLINA TEAMS WITH EPA TO ANNOUNCE FIRST ANNUAL "FIX A LEAK WEEK"

RALEIGH – The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources is partnering with EPA's WaterSense program to promote March 16-20, 2009, as the first annual "Fix a Leak Week" to remind people to check their household plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems for leaks.

WaterSense is a partnership program sponsored by EPA to protect the future of our nation's water supply by promoting and enhancing the use of water-efficient products and services. The WaterSense label makes it easy for consumers to recognize products and programs that save water without sacrificing performance or quality.

Leaks account for, on average, 11,000 gallons of water wasted in the home every year – enough to fill a backyard swimming pool. Ten percent of homes have leaks that waste 90 gallons or more per day. Common types of leaks found in the home include leaking toilet flappers, dripping faucets and other leaking valves. In most cases, fixture replacement parts don't require a major investment and can be installed by do-it-yourselfers.

One way to check for leaks is to turn off all the taps in your house, then look at your water meter. If it is still turning, chances are you have a leak somewhere. Instructions on how to read your water meter can be found on North Carolina's water conservation Web site (SaveWater.org) at: <http://savewaternc.org/ReadMeter.asp>.

A simple way to check for toilet flapper leaks is to place two dye tablets or 5-8 drops of food color into the tank of the toilet and wait 15-20 minutes. Do not flush the toilet during this test. After 15-20 minutes, look into the bowl of the toilet. If the color starts to develop in the bowl, there is a leak in the toilet and it must be repaired. Usually, installing a new flapper will correct the leak. For more information about detecting leaks in your home, visit <http://savewaternc.org/FindRepairLeaks.asp>.

Contact your local water supply system operator for more information about water conservation in your area and possible incentive or rebate programs available.

WaterSense offers the following suggestions and information about leaks:

- A good method to check for leaks is to examine your winter water usage. It's likely that a family of four has a serious leak problem if its winter water usage exceeds 12,000 gallons per month.
- 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 them if necessary.
- A showerhead leaking at 10 drips per minute wastes more than 500 gallons per year. Many leaky showerheads can be fixed by ensuring a tight connection using pipe tape and a wrench.
- An irrigation system should be checked each spring before use to make sure it was not damaged by frost or freezing. In addition, check your garden hose for leaks at its connection to the spigot and replace the hose washer if it leaks.
- Make sure you replace leaking water fixtures with new, WaterSense labeled fixtures.

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To learn more about the WaterSense program, visit <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/index.htm>; for more information about “Fix A Leak Week,” go to: <http://www.savewaternc.org/> and click on the WaterSense logo on the bottom center of the page.

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