



Alpha Plumbing, Heating & Cooling Outlines Hidden Water Leak Checks

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Alpha Plumbing, Heating & Cooling is outlining a short set of checks that homeowners across the Twin Cities area can use this fall to find hidden water leaks before freezing weather arrives. The guidance, which the company shared on its Facebook page on July 31, centers on a two-hour water meter test and the everyday signs that a small drip has turned into a steady loss of water.

Leaks in an average home can waste nearly 10,000 gallons of water a year, according to figures the company cited in that post, roughly the amount of water needed to wash 300 loads of laundry. The figure is in line with the household leak estimate published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense program. The company notes that the smallest drip can create a surprisingly large amount of waste over time, in part because it rarely draws attention.

The meter test requires no tools. Homeowners take a reading from the water meter, then avoid using any water in the house for two hours. A second reading that has changed means water moved somewhere in the system while nothing should have been running.

Appliances that draw water on their own, such as ice makers, water softeners, and irrigation timers, can move the meter without a leak and should be switched off or accounted for during the test. The test shows that water is moving when it should not be; it does not identify where the leak is or how large it is, which is where a plumber's inspection takes over.

The company also lists an unexpectedly high water bill and damp spots under sinks as signs that warrant a closer look. A bill that climbs while household habits stay the same is often the earliest indication a homeowner receives.

"Most of the leaks we find are not dramatic. They are a slow drip behind a wall or under a sink that nobody notices until the water bill jumps. Two hours without running water tells a homeowner more than most people expect," said Chad Olson, owner of Alpha Plumbing, Heating & Cooling.

The timing matters in Minnesota. Winter preparation guidance on the company's website notes that water left in outdoor faucets and connected hoses can freeze once temperatures drop, and that a frozen exterior faucet can lead to burst pipes inside the home that go unnoticed until the thaw reveals water damage.

Checking exterior spigots for drips at the same time that hoses are disconnected and drained for the season covers both concerns in a single pass. The same guidance notes that a professional plumbing appointment in the fall can reveal worn components, aging pipes or small leaks that may not be noticeable during warmer months, placing a leak check on the same autumn to-do list as draining the hoses.

Indoors, the company's water heater guidance adds the area around the tank to the list of places worth a look. Moisture, rust, or standing water near the base of a water heater can signal a slow leak, and the guidance states that even a slow leak can worsen quickly, with standing water near an appliance creating mold and structural damage risks. Supply lines under kitchen and bathroom sinks, the connections behind toilets, and the floor around a washing machine are the other common sources.

The company presents the checks as general guidance for homeowners rather than a diagnosis. The condition of any individual plumbing system depends on its age, materials, and water pressure, and a check that points to a problem is a reason to have the system assessed by a licensed plumber. The company lists pipe leak detection and repair among its residential plumbing services, alongside faucet, toilet, and water heater repair and emergency response for burst pipes and flooding.

"If the meter moved and nothing was using water, there is almost always a leak somewhere, even when the floor is dry. Write down the reading, look under the sinks and around the water heater, and have it checked before the cold settles in," Olson said.

Alpha Plumbing, Heating & Cooling is a locally owned and independent residential plumbing, heating and cooling company based in Bloomington, Minnesota. Its residential services cover plumbing installation and repair, water heaters and water filtration, gas line work and gas leak detection, drain and sewer service, and heating and cooling equipment, with licensed technicians handling the work.

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Alpha Plumbing, Heating & Cooling

We are a locally owned HVAC and plumbing company in Bloomington, Minnesota, dedicated to honest service and fair pricing. Our experienced team handles heating, cooling, plumbing, gas and drain work with care and quality you can rely on.

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