

# Detecting and Correcting Leaks

By JOE SZYNKOWSKI | Green Shoot Media

Leaking pipes do more than impact your water bill. When a leak goes untreated, you can expect serious safety risks, as well as damage to the structural integrity of your home.

According to the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety, plumbing-system failures are the leading source of residential water loss. Contacting a local plumber at the first sign of trouble is the most efficient way to resolve potential damage.

## DANGERS OF WATER IN THE HOME

When a pipe leaks beneath your sink, the visible damage includes cracked or swollen floor coverings, causing rot to the subfloor and ruining the base of your cabinets. The damage that goes on out of sight is much more significant and expensive.

If you ignore a leak for too long, the room could require a complete renovation.

Exposure to water can weaken your home's joists, a series of horizontal boards used to support a floor or ceiling. Once they are weakened, a floor is no longer safe to walk on.

One major health concern also is associated with leaks. Mold thrives in warm, wet conditions, making cabinets or basements a breeding



ground.

When a leak occurs, it's time to call a local expert and alleviate the problem before a complete remodel is necessary. It's a good idea to have a plumber perform regular examinations to make sure water is flowing efficiently.

## THE DANGERS OF MOLD

Typically, there is a level of mold in every home. It's carried through the air in tiny

spores, and at safe levels, doesn't cause serious issues. However, when a spore lands on a wet or damp spot, it grows — quickly. This is when health problems arise.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that numerous species of mold cause infection through respiratory exposure. Think of how much time you are in your home. Is the air clean for you and your family?

If a mold problem goes unaddressed, here are some of the symptoms you might face:

- Nasal stuffiness and wheezing;
- Skin and eye irritation;
- Fever, shortness of breath; and
- Obstructive lung disease (in serious cases).

## ALWAYS USE A LICENSED PLUMBER

Water supply is a unique

system that is best left to an expert to achieve the proper results.

A plumber will be able to assess the water damage and tell you whether a contractor is necessary to repair the important structural components of your home.

Also, request that the plumber assess the location of the leak for any present mold. Remember, a small leak should never go ignored.



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#### REAL ESTATE 101



### Should You Hire a Pro?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, you might be able to handle a small mold problem yourself. If the affected area is larger than 10 square feet, however, the EPA recommends hiring a professional.

If you decide to tackle the problem yourself, the EPA recommends the following tips:

- Fix plumbing leaks and other water problems as soon as possible. Dry all items completely.
- Scrub mold off hard surfaces with detergent and water, and dry completely.
- Absorbent or porous materials, such as ceiling tiles and carpet, may have to be thrown away if they become moldy.
- Avoid exposing yourself or others to mold.
- Do not paint or caulk moldy surfaces. It is likely to peel.

Read the EPA's Mold Cleanup Tips and Techniques at <http://bit.ly/2kFVHxZ>.

#### HOMEWISE GLOSSARY

**Transaction sides:** The two sides of a transaction, sellers and buyers. The term used to record the number of transactions in which a real estate sales agent or broker was involved during a specific period.

SOURCE: Realtor.org

## AD SPACE