

The Property Damage You're Most Likely to Suffer

Water damage accounted for almost half of all property damage losses in 2015, up from about a quarter of all losses in 2011. Until recently, if you were away from home when a leak developed, you had to hope someone was home to shut off the water to minimize damage. But you can prevent catastrophes with systems that control all water coming into a home or sensor networks that monitor leaks near water-using appliances and devices, or systems that do both.



Centralized Systems

1 Shut-Off Valve



Systems like the Sentinel Hydrosolutions Leak Defense rely on a shut-off valve attached to home's main water line. It should be located in a protected but accessible place - often in the basement - that is adjacent to an electrical outlet.

2 Wireless Control Panel



The control panel should be located in a high traffic area, where the alarm is likely to be heard. The system works by monitoring the amount of water that flows into the home in a given period of time. When in the Home mode, homeowners set the alarm to trigger after the maximum continuous duration of water use by showers, dishwashers and sprinklers - typically about 30 minutes. When they are away, homeowners ordinarily trigger the alarm after 5 minutes of continuous water flow. When the continuous water flow limit is exceeded, the shut-off valve turns off the home's water supply and triggers the alarm. In addition to alerting homeowners to water leaks, the system can be triggered by a malfunctioning devices like a constantly running toilet or a sprinkler left on longer than necessary, helping homeowners avoid unexpectedly high water bills.

3 Smart Phone APP



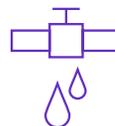
The alarms can be sent as emails or text messages to a mobile phone. Through the system's APP, homeowners can control the system in the same way as if they were at home.

Device Sensors



The alarms can be sent as emails or text messages to a mobile Placing sensors like the D-Link Wi-Fi Water Sensor or the Fibaro Flood Sensor near water-using appliances and devices is an alternative way to detect leaks. Some sensors work on batteries, while others need to be plugged into a wall outlet. Most have to be coupled with a smart-home automation hub, but some use a home's Wi-Fi network to communicate. Most sound an alarm on the device when water is detected, as well as sending an alert to your smart phone. A downside of this approach is that you will detect leaks only near the device, not elsewhere in the home's plumbing system.

Combination Systems



Some water detection systems, such as PipeBurst Pro or Hydrocom's Water Controller, connect device sensors with a shut off valve attached to the home's main water line. The device sensors can be triggered by leaks tat would be too small to trigger the continuous flow monitor connected to the home's main water line in the centralized systems. They can also shut off the water if the home's temperature falls below 40 degrees, preventing burst frozen pipes from damaging the home.