Washing Machine Is Leaking

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First Steps

Shut off the water to the washing machine**.** It will help you to get everything dry, and you may notice that the wall-mounted shutoff valves leak when you are doing this. You have a few questions to ask once the water is off. When you are ready to search for a specific leak turn the water back on.

Where Does It Leak?

- Look carefully for where the source of the leak seems to be, front or rear for example. Dried mineral or detergent deposits or rusted areas can give a clue.
- It is essential to dry everything off first because then the leak is easier to spot.
- You may even notice things like the location of the moisture as you are drying the machine.

When Does It Leak?

If the machine **leaks constantly**, running or not, that points to a leak that is under constant pressure. Most of the pressure-type leaks will be to the rear of the machine.

- The first place to check is the valves and hoses and connections that supply water to the machine. If you find any leaking, try to tighten them and check again.
    - Watch carefully, as water can run down a hose from a leaking connection, and mislead you as to the leak location.
    - Sometimes putting your hand around a hose will allow you to see if water is running down a hose from above, as the water will run over or onto your hand.
- The next place to look is the solenoid water valve that is internal to the machine. If the valve body is cracked, or a seal has failed, it will drip. Replace it.
- You may have a machine that fills the drum or tub with water even when shut off. This is a failed solenoid valve and you should just replace the valve.

If the machine **leaks only when running**, observation is your best tool. Observing your running washing machine may be like watching paint dry, but it may also allow your floors to dry!

- **Does it leak when the machine is filled with water?**
    - This could be related to the machine overfilling and overflowing onto the floor.
        - This is more common with top-load machines because the open top gap with the cabinet allows a ready path for overflow.
        - They also operate with higher water levels than are usually encountered with a front load machine, so there's less room for any sort of malfunction with the water level control.
        - Go to Overfilling for more information
    - This may be a problem with your solenoid valve, and the internal hoses that are connected to it. Go to Internal Leaks, below.
    - Your detergent dispenser may have a leak or clog, either in the body of it or in the attached hoses. This will be most apparent in the portion of the cycle where the machine is filling or sending water through the dispenser. Go to Internal Leaks, below.
- **Does it leak during the wash cycle?**
    - This can arise from overfilling, causing splashing in a machine with an agitator, which ends up on the ground. Go to Overfilling down below.
    - It could be the tub seals.

- On top load machines, the seals see water continuously and so they can leak significantly. The movement of the agitator makes this leak more apparent when the machine is running.
- On front-load machines, the leak is less pronounced but will be found at the rear of the machine which is a handy clue.
- Go to Tub Seals for more info.

- It can be the water level tube has cracked or come off. This will be a significant leak, especially if it slips off on a top load machine, and will likely lead to the machine overflowing as well. Go to Overfilling, below.
- Front-loaders often have a vent for the drum which will drip if the valve for the vent sticks. If your leak is from the drum vent (usually on the upper rear of the machine) go to Drum Vent, below.
- It can also be from a failing door seal on a front load machine. Go to Door Seal for more steps.

- **Does it leak when the machine is draining?**
  - This is the most common failure because the volume of water is large, and there are many places where leaks can occur simply from wear and tear. Also, the lint in the water can cause clogs which lead to leakage.
  - If the leak is near the front, you should check the pump for leakage. Check the filters located at the front of the machine as well. Start at Pump and Filter below.
  - If toward the rear, it is likely a problem with the drain hose. We will walk through those possibilities below at Drain Hose.
  - The problem may also be a clog in your home plumbing system. This will likely leave the biggest puddle, and the surface of the wall behind the machine will likely be wet. Go to Drain Hose for more.

Causes

1 Pump and Filter Failures

Pump

The problems with the pump can be either hose-related, crack-related, or seal related.

- The hoses can shift on the pump, especially if they are held only by barbs on the pump. If the pump has been replaced recently this is a common failure. Reinstall the

hoses and add clamps if there aren't any. Make sure the clamps are tight if they are already present. Some drain pumps (GE) will have the hoses glued in place, and if they have been disturbed, you may need to re-glue them.

- Check the pump body for cracks. Sometimes the body will crack and one way to check is to push on the body and outlets of the pump while it is in place. Better still is to remove it and inspect it closely. if you can observe it while running that is the best of all, especially if you have dried everything first. You will need to turn on the water for this check. This is hard to do on a front loader. You might want to place colored rags or towels near the pump to help spot leaks while the machine is running.
- The seals on some pumps can wear out and the pump will leak at the drive shaft.
- The bellows (hose) from the drum or tub to the pump can be cracked or have been sipped off partially. The leak will be substantial and almost continuous when the machine is operating. You may feel water there that has run down from above so make sure you dry everything and test.

Filter

Many machines will have a filter that is located near the pump and has a number of seals that can leak.

- Like the pump, there are also hoses attached to the filter, that can either come off or become cracked. If you find any cracked hoses, replace them.
- If there is a drain hose attached to allow the machine to be drained of residual water, it is another source of leaks, especially if the plug in the hose becomes worn. Check to see that the plug is snug, and if not, replace it.
- Leaks can also occur after cleaning the filter if it is improperly installed. Remove and reinstall the filter, and make sure it goes fully into place.
- Check the filter housing body and lid for cracks, if there are any, replace it.

2 Clogged Drain Hose

If you are here because the symptoms point to a problem with the drain hose, check these items...

- Check the hose for clogs especially downstream of the anti-siphon, usually located on the rear bulkhead (panel) of the machine. Some machines will not have these, or will just have a raised portion of hose inside the machine.

- Check the drain hose for cracks. Some hoses are made of corrugated plastic material rather than rubber material and can be damaged or cracked. Stretch the hose and flex it and look carefully.
- The home plumbing system may have a clog or partial clog, which will cause it to overflow when the pump starts emptying the machine. Since the flow is quite fast from the pump, a partially clogged pipe may not drain quickly enough and will overflow where the drain hose enters it. The wall near the drain pipe may be wet too. If you see these signs clear any clogs from the plumbing and then test.

3 Overfilling

Your washing machine can have too much of a good thing when it fills too much. When a machine is overfilled, water can more easily escape. You will have to observe carefully and see if you can check the water level in the machine. Turn the water back on to start.

- This isn't too difficult with top-load machines as it is simple enough to open the lid and check.
    - You might have to unplug the machine so that it won't try to pump out first before allowing the lid to open.
    - Top loaders with agitators can sometimes splash enough that the water gets out of the tub and onto the floor.
    - Also too much detergent can cause suds that overflows onto the floor.
- Many front-load machines can be observed through the front door which is usually transparent. They also will not allow the door to be opened unless the machine can sense that it is empty, or the water level is low enough.
- To check this you should first check the tube that leads to the water level switch/ sensor. Make sure it isn't clogged. You can clear it by blowing through it. If you can't blow through it, you should remove it and either clean or replace it.
- You should also see that the pressure switch or sensor is operating correctly. It should click when you blow air into it; lung pressure is fine. Some may be adjustable. If no click replace it.
- A number of front-load machines use a device that varies the frequency of a resonant circuit by moving coils with a diaphragm. This has no contacts (so no click) and thus is very reliable, you can usually check it by getting into a diagnostic mode for your particular machine.

4 Tub Seal Failure

On a top load machine, a leaking tub seal poses a larger problem, as it will both leak substantially and will lead to corrosion of the drive system located below it. If the tub seal is leaking it is a fairly involved, but not impossible fix.

- A clue will be a splash or spray line of water on the inside of the washing machine at about the level of the bottom of the drum.
- The leak may also show up below the center of the tub as well. from leakage when the driveshaft is turning more slowly.
- If you see these conditions, it will be worthwhile to try to operate the machine with some of the covers or cabinet pieces removed so you can observe the leak directly, as you want to be sure of what's wrong before you do the repair. Turn the water back on and let the machine do its thing. If you see the leak, replace the seal.

5 Internal Leaks

There are two main sources of internal leaks, other than items we have already addressed, like the pump, drain hose, and filter. These include the detergent dispenser and associated hoses, and the water inlet solenoid valve. You will need to operate the machine with water, so turn the water supply on.

Detergent Dispenser Damage

Front-load washers generally have the detergent dispenser located on the front of the machine, either in a small drawer or under a movable cover. Top load washers have them as cups located around the upper portion of the machine under the lid, or they may also have a drawer, usually located under the lid of the machine.

- This dispenser can be damaged or cracked and will leak when water is running through it as the detergent is added to the wash water. If it is cracked, replace it.
- This can happen while the machine is filling or during the wash cycle.
    - You should watch the operation of front load machines with the top cover removed. Top-load machines can be observed with the front cover removed. To avoid shock hazards avoid touching internal parts of the machine while it is operating. Look and listen for leaks.
    - Feeling the dispenser and underneath it **with the machine unplugged** (no shock hazard) can help you locate leaks.

- The hoses from the detergent dispenser to the drum can also become partially clogged and will cause the dispenser to overflow.
  - If you see this overflow condition, remove the hoses and clean them out fully. Reattach them afterward. Test the machine.
  - Detergent and fabric softener can deposit residues that will obstruct the hose (there may also be small parts dropped in by small hands too that can contribute).
- The hoses from the detergent dispenser to the washer drum or tub can become detached and will cause a substantial leak. Reattach the hose if possible, making sure you check the dispenser and tub or drum for damage that may have caused the hose to come loose.
- The hoses leading to the detergent dispenser can be improperly attached, or cracked and will cause a leak, observation is the easiest way to spot this. If you find a leak there, determine the cause and reattach or replace the hose.

Solenoid Valve Cracked

The solenoid valve and attached hoses can leak. Since, in general, the water is fed from the solenoid valve to the detergent dispenser, you likely have checked the hoses already.

The valve itself can leak from improperly installed hoses or cracks in the body or outlets. An overtightened clamp can break plastic parts (one reason for spring-type hose clamps being so common in this application) Occasionally, a seal can fail near the coils, so check thoroughly.

Faulty Vent Bellows Hose

Check the condition of all of the vent bellows hose attached to the washer drum. Look for cracks or tears. Make sure it is securely attached, that the clamps are snug, and that the ports on the drum and vent outlet are not damaged.

GE Washing Machine Leaking Water Into Tub - Water Valve Replacement

No estimate | Moderate

View Guide

6 Door Seal Failure

This is found exclusively on front-load machines and can fail in a number of different ways.

- The seal can have slipped out of place, which will cause a leak.
- The seal is dirty which can prevent it from sealing properly.
- The seal is damaged or punctured, which will also cause a leak.

You can look for signs of a leaking door seal, mainly by the location of evidence of leaking, it will be near the front of the machine. Especially with punctures, the location of deposits can help you pinpoint the leak.

- Clean the seal thoroughly, especially parts that will be in contact with the door.
- While cleaning, check the seal to see that it is installed correctly and not rolled or improperly seated
- Once you have checked for proper installation, stretch the seal, and look all over it for tears or punctures. If you find one, replace the seal.

7 Faulty Drum Vent

The drum vent may incorporate a valve that allows for air to circulate into and out of the drum. It may leak either because the valve is stuck, because improper detergent is being used, too much detergent is being used, or because the machine is improperly leveled. If the machine is leaking from the rear vent opening check the following things.

- Make sure you are using HE-type detergent. Normal detergent will create too many suds and the excess will frequently leak out the vent. Use the right detergent.
- Too much detergent (even HE type) can have the same effect as Non-HE detergent. Make sure you follow the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Make sure your machine is properly leveled. Your operating manual should have instructions for checking this.
- If you have checked these causes, then another check is to remove the vent bellows from the drum, and check the valve located there on some machines. If it sticks open it can cause leaking. You should also make sure the bellows aren't torn or damaged as that will also cause leaking.