

Conservation Tips



There are a number of easy ways to save water, and they all start with YOU. When you save water, you save money on your utility bills. Here are just a few ways...

In The Kitchen

- When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.
- Some refrigerators, air conditioners and ice-makers are cooled with wasted flows of water. Consider upgrading with air-cooled appliances for significant water savings.
- Never run the dishwasher without a full load. This practice will save water, energy, detergent, and money.
- Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Compost vegetable food waste instead and save gallons every time.
- For cold drinks keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap. This way, every drop goes down you and not the drain.
- Use a small pan of cold water when cleaning vegetables, rather than letting the water run over them. Then, collect the water you use for rinsing fruits and vegetables, and reuse it to water house plants.
- Use only a little water in the pot and put a lid on it for cooking most food. Not only does this method save water, but food is more nutritious since vitamins and minerals are not poured down the drain with the extra cooking water.
- Designate one glass for your drinking water each day or refill a water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses to wash.
- Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator for water efficiency and food safety.

- If your dishwasher is new, cut back on rinsing. Newer models clean more thoroughly than older ones.
- If you accidentally drop ice cubes when filling your glass from the freezer or when you have ice left in your cup from a take-out restaurant, don't throw it in the trash, dump it on a plant, instead.

Always keep water conservation in mind, and think of other ways to save in the kitchen. Making too much coffee or letting ice cubes melt in the sink can add up over time. By making these small changes in the kitchen, you can count on bigger savings on your yearly water bill.

In The Bathroom

- Shorten your shower by a minute or two and you'll save up to 150 gallons per month.
- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and save 25 gallons a month.
- Take a shower instead of taking a bath. Showers with low-flow shower heads use less water than taking a bath.
- Turn off the water while you wash your hair to save up to 150 gallons a month.
- Reduce the level of the water being used in a bathtub by one or two inches if a shower is not available.
- When remodeling a bathroom, install a new low-volume flush toilet that uses only 1.6 gallons per flush.
- Test toilets for leaks. Add a few drops of food coloring or a dye tablet to the water in the tank, but do not flush the toilet. Watch to see if the coloring appears in the bowl within a few minutes. If it does, the toilet has a silent leak that needs to be repaired.
- Use a toilet tank displacement device such as a toilet dam or bag. Another alternative is filling a plastic bottle with stones or water, recapped, and placed in the toilet tank. These devices will reduce the volume of water in the tank but will still provide enough for flushing. Displacement devices are not recommended with new low-volume flush toilets.
- Never use the toilet to dispose of cleansing tissues, cigarette butts, or other trash. This wastes a great deal of water and also places an unnecessary load on the sewage treatment plant or septic tank.
- Do not use hot water when cold will do. Water and energy can be saved by washing hands with soap and cold water. Hot water should be added only when hands are especially dirty.
- Do not let the water run when washing hands. Water should be turned off while washing and scrubbing and be turned on again to rinse. A cutoff valve may be installed on the faucet.
- When shaving, fill the lavatory basin with hot water instead of letting the water run continuously.
- Place water-saving aerators on all of your faucets.

In The Laundry

- Use your clothes washer and dishwasher only when they are full. This will save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- Washing dark clothes in cold water saves both water and energy while it helps your clothes to keep their colors.
- When doing laundry, match the water level to the size of the load.

Plumbing and Appliances

- Check water requirements of various models and brands when considering purchasing any new appliances. Some use less water than others.
- Check all waterline connections and faucets for leaks. A slow drip can waste as much as 170 gallons of water EACH DAY, or 5,000 gallons per month, and will add to the water bill.
- Learn to repair faucets so that drips can be corrected promptly. It is easy to do, costs very little, and can mean a substantial savings in plumbing and water bills.
- Check for hidden water leakage such as a leak between the water meter and the house. To check, turn off all indoor and outdoor faucets and water-using appliances. The water meter should be read at 10 to 20 minute intervals. If it continues to run or turn, a leak probably exists and needs to be located.
- Insulate all hot water pipes to reduce the delays (and wasted water) experienced while waiting for the water to "run hot."
- Be sure the water heater thermostat is not set too high. Extremely hot settings waste water and energy because the water often has to be cooled with cold water before it can be used.
- Use a moisture meter to determine when house plants need water. More plants die from over-watering than from being on the dry side.
- Winterize outdoor spigots and faucets when cold temperatures arrive to prevent pipes from freezing and bursting.

For Outdoor Use

- Water only when needed. Look at the grass, feel the soil, or use a soil moisture meter to determine when to water.
- Do not over-water. Soil can hold only so much moisture, and the rest simply runs off. A timer will help, and either a kitchen timer or an alarm clock will do. Apply only enough water to fill the plant's root zone. Excess water beyond that is wasted. One and a half inches of water applied once a week in the summer will keep most grasses alive and healthy.
- Water lawns early in the morning during the hotter summer months. Otherwise, much of the water used on the lawn can simply evaporate between the sprinkler and the grass.
- To avoid excessive evaporation, use a sprinkler that produces large drops of water, rather than a fine mist. Sprinklers that send droplets out on a low angle

also help control evaporation. Adjust sprinkler heads as necessary, to avoid waste, runoff and ensure proper coverage.

- Set automatic sprinkler systems to provide thorough, but infrequent watering. Pressure-regulating devices should be set to design specifications. Rain shut-off devices can prevent watering in the rain.
- Use drip irrigation systems for bedded plants, trees, or shrubs, or turn soaker hoses upside-down so the holes are on the bottom. This will help avoid evaporation.
- Water slowly for better absorption, and never water on a windy day.
- Forget about watering the streets or walks or driveways. They will never grow a thing.
- Condition the soil with mulch or compost before planting grass or flowerbeds so that water will soak in rather than run off.
- Fertilize lawns at least twice a year for root stimulation, but do not over-fertilize. Grass with a good root system makes better use of less water and is more drought-tolerant.
- Do not scalp lawns when mowing during hot weather. Taller grass holds moisture better. Grass should be cut fairly often, so that only 1/2 to 3/4 inch is trimmed off. A better looking lawn will result.
- Use a watering can or hand water with the hose in small areas of the lawn that need more frequent watering (those near walks or driveways or in especially hot, sunny spots.)
- Use water-wise plants. Learn what types of grass, shrubbery, and plants do best in the area and in which parts of the lawn, and then plant accordingly. Choose plants that have low water requirements, are drought-tolerant, and are adapted to the area of the state where they are to be planted.
- Consider decorating some areas of the lawn with wood chips, rocks, gravel, or other materials now available that require no water at all.
- Do not "sweep" walks and driveways with the hose. Use a broom or rake instead.
- When washing the car, use a bucket of soapy water and turn on the hose only for rinsing.
- We're more likely to notice leaks indoors, but don't forget to check outdoor faucets, sprinklers and hoses for leaks.