



Water Conservation

You're In Control

- Try to do one thing each day to save water. Don't worry if the savings are minimal. Every drop counts and every person can make a difference.
- Be aware of and follow all water conservation and water shortage rules and restrictions that may be in effect in your area.
- Make sure your children are aware of the need to conserve water.

Watching Water Wasters in the Kitchen and Bathroom

The Toilet

- Check for toilet leaks by adding food coloring to the tank. If the toilet is leaking, color will appear in the bowl within 30 minutes. Check the toilet for worn out, corroded, or bent parts.
- Install a toilet dam or displacement device such as a bag or bottle to cut down on the amount of water needed for each flushing. Do not use a rock or brick as these can disintegrate and cause improper sealing after flushing. Be sure installation does not interfere with operating parts.
- Avoid unnecessary flushing. Dispose of tissues, insects, and other similar waste in the trash rather than the toilet.
- If the toilet flush handle frequently sticks in the flush position, letting water run constantly, replace or adjust it.

The Shower/Bath

- Replace your showerhead with an ultra low-flow version, saving up to 2.5 gallons per minute.
- In the shower, instead of increasing the hot or cold water flow to adjust the water temperature, try decreasing the flow to achieve a comfortable water temperature.
- Use the minimum amount of water needed for a bath by closing the drain first and filling the tub only 1/3 full. The initial burst of cold water can be warmed by adding hot water later.
- Don't let the water run while shaving, washing your face, or brushing your teeth.

The Kitchen

- Minimize the use of kitchen sink disposals; they require a lot of water to operate properly. Consider a compost pile as an alternate method of disposing of food waste.
- Store drinking water in the refrigerator rather than letting the tap run to get a cool glass of water.
- Do not use running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods. Defrost them overnight in the refrigerator, or by using the defrost setting on your microwave.
- Consider installing an instant water heater on your kitchen sink so you don't have to let the water run while it heats up. This will reduce heating costs for your household.

Washing Dishes

- When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water. Quickly rinse under a slow stream of water from the faucet. Use the dirty water to run your sink disposal if necessary.
- Fully load automatic dishwashers; they use the same amount of water no matter how much is in them.
- Buy dishwashers with water and energy saving options.

Other Water Wasters in Your Home

Appliances

- Unlike your dishwasher, the amount of water your washing machine uses is adjustable; adjust according to load size.
- Look for water saving washing machines and buy them. Horizontal loading machines use less water than top-loading machines.

Maintenance

- Verify that your home is leak free, because many homes have hidden water leaks. Read your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, there is a leak.
- Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. If your faucet is dripping at the rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste 2,700 gallons per year.
- Retrofit all wasteful household faucets by installing aerators with flow restrictors.
- Insulate your water pipes. You'll get hot water faster and avoid wasting water.

Outdoor Water Wasters to Watch

Watering the Lawn

- Water lawns during the early morning hours when temperatures and wind speed are the lowest. This reduces losses from evaporation.
- Don't water your street, driveway, or sidewalk. Position your sprinklers so that your water lands on the lawn and shrubs and not the paved areas.
- Install sprinklers that are the most water-efficient for each use such as micro and drip irrigation and soaker hoses.
- Regularly check sprinkler systems and timing devices to be sure they are operating properly. Teach your family how to shut off automatic systems so they can turn them off when storms are approaching.
- Do not leave sprinklers or hoses unattended. Your garden hose can pour out 600 gallons or more in only a few hours. Use a kitchen timer to remind yourself to turn the water off.

Lawn Care

- Raise your lawn mower blade to at least three inches. A lawn cut higher encourages grass roots to grow deeper, shades the root system, and holds soil moisture better than closely-clipped lawns.
- Avoid over fertilizing your lawn. The application of fertilizers increases the need for water and is a source of water pollution.

Landscaping

- Mulch to retain moisture in the soil. Mulching also helps to control weeds that compete with plants for water.
- Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. If your faucet is dripping at the rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste 2,700 gallons per year.
- Plant native and/or drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs, and trees. Check with your local nursery for advice. Group plants together based on similar water needs.
- Outfit your hose with a shut-off nozzle which can be adjusted down to a fine spray so that water flows only as needed. When finished, turn it off at the faucet instead of at the nozzle to avoid leaks.

Other Outdoor Water Wasters

- Avoid hosing down your driveway or sidewalk; use a broom instead and save hundreds of gallons of drinkable water.
- Check all hoses, connectors, and spigots regularly. Replace or add washers if you find leaks.

Earth 911:

There are many other water conservation tips and ideas along with much more Earth Friendly information available at the [Earth 911](#) Web site.