



Water Conservation Tips for Residential Properties

Getting Started

There are three basic ways to use less water – change your habits, repair leaks, and install water saving devices. The first step is to audit your water use practices. Where do you use the most water? Where is it wasted? The following tips can help you evaluate your water use and provide ideas for saving water at your home.

Bathroom

- Check your toilets for leaks. Add some food coloring to the tank. If color appears in the bowl after 15 minutes you have a leak. Flush after testing to prevent dye from staining the toilet.
- Install a low-flow aerator on your sink.
- Don't let water run while washing your face or hands, shaving, or brushing your teeth.
- Reuse your bath towels.
- Take a shallow bath – a bathtub holds more than 50 gallons of water.
- If your showerhead can fill a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, then replace it with a low flow showerhead.
- Take shorter showers and turn off the water while soaping up. By keeping your shower to five minutes you'll save up to 1000 gallons a month.
- Place a bucket under the shower while waiting for the water to warm up and use the water for your plants.
- When purchasing a new toilet, choose a High Efficiency Toilet (HET) which uses an average of 1.28 gallons per flush. Rebates available.
- Check faucets, showerheads, and pipes for leaks and make any needed repairs.

Kitchen

- If washing dishes in the sink, don't leave the tap running. Use one side of the sink (or a large bowl) to hold soapy water and the other for rinse water.
- Run the dishwasher only when it's full, avoid extra cycles, and select no-heat drying.
- Install aerators on your faucets.
- Collect the water you use for rinsing produce and reuse it for houseplants or the garden.
- Install an instant hot water heater on your kitchen sink so you don't have to run the tap while it heats up.
- Instead of using the garbage disposal, start a compost pile instead.

Laundry

- Use the load selector and match the water level to the load size, or do only full loads. Use only as much detergent as is needed. Presoak heavily soiled items.

- Check faucets and hose connections for leaks.
- When buying a new machine, select one that uses the least water per pound of laundry. (Visit www.cee1.org for more information.) Rebates available for High Efficiency, Energy Star labeled clothes washers.

Outdoors

- Locate your water meter and learn how to read it.
- Use mulch around landscape plantings. Mulch will help eliminate weeds and hold moisture in the soil.
- Select hardy plants that don't need much water. Native and drought tolerant plants adapted to our climate will survive well without supplemental watering once established. Plant in the fall when watering requirements are lower.
- If you have an irrigation controller, learn how to use the various features. Make seasonal adjustments and use the multiple programs function to group stations of plants with similar water needs together. If you have lost your instruction manual, most are available online.
- Raise the mowing height on your lawn mower. This shades the root zone and promotes healthier grass that can better survive dry periods.
- Keep your irrigation system running efficiently. Turn the system on and check for breaks and misaligned or clogged sprinkler heads. Upgrade to water saving equipment such as rain or soil-moisture sensors, MP rotator heads, and ET weather based controllers.
- Use low volume irrigation such as drip, soaker hoses, and micro-spray whenever possible.
- Water plants only when necessary. Two to three times per week during summer is sufficient for lawns. Established shrubs, trees and drought tolerant species can usually get by on little to no water. When needed, water these plants slowly and thoroughly. Water shady areas less frequently.
- Adjust the amount of water plants receive with each season. During spring, plants require about 2/3 of the amount of summer water, in autumn, about ½. Turn your irrigation OFF during the winter months.
- Water before 10:00am to reduce chance of evaporation and wind.
- For residents sharing common landscape areas, report any leaks, runoff, broken pipes or misaligned sprinklers to the property manager.
- Remove lawn that is not serving a functional purpose.
- Avoid fertilizing and pruning unnecessarily. It stimulates excessive plant growth and a greater need for water.
- Consider attending a class or workshop to learn better horticultural and irrigation practices.
- For pools and spas, use a cover to reduce evaporation. Keep the water level low enough to avoid loss from splashing and spilling. Check your pool's filtration system for leaks.
- Wash your cars less often.

Contact the Water Conservation Office for more information. We offer FREE water saving devices and gardening literature to our customers.