

WISE WATER USE

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Check Your Water Wisdom

Why check?

Because

- **Water conservation saves you money and helps prevent water pollution in nearby lakes, rivers and watersheds.**
- **Overloading municipal sewer systems can cause untreated sewage to flow into waterways and cellars.**
- **Water saving practices can reduce home water use by 35%. The average household uses 350 gallons per day (GPD) but could save 125 GPD. The average individual currently using 70 GPD could save 25.**

There are many ways to save water, and they all start with
You.

Please put a check mark in the bullet below once you have started to practice this water saving recommendation.

Bath Shower Bathroom Sink

The Facts:

- A full tub uses about 36-70 gallons of water.
- A shower uses 2 to 2.5 gal per minute (gpm). Old shower heads use 4 gpm.
- Leaks: one drip every second adds up to 5 gallons per day or more of wasted water.

Tips:

- o Check taps and shower heads for leaks.
- o Install a water saving shower head with a shutoff button to save .5 gpm
- o Shut off shower during lathering up, washing hair, and shaving legs.
- o If your shower fills a 1 gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, replace the showerhead with a water saver head.
- o When turning on water in the shower, collect as much of the wasted water as possible in a bucket, use for humidifying in winter, watering plants in summer.
- o Take shorter showers. Keep them under 5 min. You can save up to 1,000 gpm
- o Install low-flow faucet aerators
- o Install converters to existing showerheads which will automatically pause a running shower once it gets warm
- o Insulate pipes with pre-slit foam pipe insulation
- o Do not let water run while brushing your teeth: save up to 4 gpm.
- o Use stoppered water to shave, not running water. Save about 300 gpm.

Notes

Kitchen

The Facts:

- Conserving water can extend the life of your septic system by reducing soil saturation and by reducing any pollution due to leaks.
- The smaller the amount of water flowing through the septic system or the municipal system, the lower is the likelihood of pollution.

TIPS

- While waiting for hot water in the sink, either collect the wasted water or use it for a cold water task. You can store such cold water in the washing machine.
- When buying low-flow aerators, be sure to read the label for the actual GPM rating. Often big retailers promote low-flow rated at 2.5 GPM, which is at the top of the low-flow spectrum, good for the sink, but for the bathroom, 1.5 GPM aerator works fine.
- Wipe or scrape dishes before loading them into the dishwasher and save 2 to 4 gal. of water. If you rinse, the pre-rinse cycle becomes unnecessary and wastes water.
- Run dishwashers only when full.
- In spill situations, consider using a cloth rather than a paper towel. Purchase paper towel rolls that have half sheets perforated.
- Instead of running water, use bowls of water to soak and pre-rinse dishes, to wash fruits and vegetables. Then use the left over water to water plants.
- If you have a double-basin, fill one with soapy water and one with rinse water. If you have a single basin sink, gather washed dishes in a dish rack and rinse them with a spray device or a pail full of hot water. Dual-swivel aerators are available to make this task easier.
- Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator.
- For hikes, carry a personal water filter bottle which enables the user to drink water safely from rivers or lakes.
- Compost instead of using the garbage disposal. Garbage disposals use a large volume of water and add to the solids in a septic tank or municipal system.
- Designate one glass for your drinking water each day or refill a water bottle to cut down on number of glasses to wash.
- Soak pots and pans instead of letting water run as you scrape them.
- Don't use running water to thaw food; for water saving and food safety, defrost food in the refrigerator.
- Install an instant water heater near your kitchen sink so you don't have to run water to get hot water.
- Use leftover water from cooked or steamed foods to start a nutritious soup.
- Cook food in as little water as possible.
- If you accidentally drop ice cubes, don't waste them, drop them in a house plant instead.
- When shopping for a new dishwasher, use the Consortium for Energy Efficiency website to compare water use in models

Lawns

The Facts:

- Water conservation is essential, even in areas where water seems abundant, because in addition to saving money, water conservation reduces pollution to watersheds.
- Overloaded municipal sewer systems can cause untreated sewage to flow into water ways.

Tips

- o Water your lawn slowly, thoroughly and as infrequently as possible; a deep soak replenishes roots. A light watering evaporates quickly and encourages shallow root systems. Put an empty tuna can on your lawn. When it's full, you've watered enough.
- o Water in early morning or evening. Use a drip hose
- o Wash car in the grass or near hedges and shrubs; use a hose with on/off nozzle. Or use a commercial car wash that recycles water. Use a bucket for soaping, hose for rinsing only to save up to 150 gal per wash.
- o Mulch around trees, shrubs, and hedges. Two to 4" of organic material will increase moisture retention. Press the mulch down around the drip line of each plant to form a slight depression to minimize runoff.
- o Use a broom, not a hose, to clean driveways and sidewalks.
- o Get a rain barrel.
- o Plant native, drought resistant plants and grass that require less water.
- o Consider applying the principles of xeriscape for low-maintenance, drought resistant yard.
- o Install swales and plant on slopes to help minimize runoff.
- o Group plants according to their watering needs.
- o Use porous material for walkways and patios.
- o Reduce lawn area by planting native shrubs and ground covers; use a mulching mower.
- o Avoid planting grass in areas hard to water such as steep inclines. Use ground cover or shrubbery.
- o Allow leaf litter to accumulate on the soil to keep the soil cooler and to reduce evaporation.
- o Compost.
- o Become familiar with the services of Conservation District office in your county.
- o Position sprinklers so they hit all grass, not the driveway. Avoid sprinkling on windy days.
- o Determine if your lawn needs watering by stepping on the grass. If it springs back up when you move, it doesn't need watering.
- o Allowing grass to grow to 3" will promote water retention in the soil.
- o Most lawns need only about 1" of water per week. Stop watering altogether during dry spells to allow grass to go dormant. The grass will come back.
- o Add organic material to your soil to increase its water retention. Areas already planted can be top dressed with compost or organic matter.

Notes

Laundry

TIPS

- With clothes washers, avoid the permanent press cycle which uses an added 5 gal. for the extra rinse.
- Replace old clothes washers, consider buying a water saving frontload washer.
- Washing dark clothes in cold water saves water and energy and helps your clothes retain their color.
- When shopping for a new washing machine, compare resource savings among Energy Star models. Some can save up to 20 gal. per load.
- Have a plumber re-route your grey water to trees and plants rather than to the sewer line. Check with you municipality or county for codes.
- Wash only full loads.

Pools and Fountains

TIPS

- Use a pool cover to reduce evaporation.
- Use recirculation pumps in fountains; trickling or cascading fountains lose less water to evaporation than do those that spray water.
- When back-washing your pool, consider using the water on salt-tolerant plants in the landscape.
- Check pool for leaks often especially if you have an automatic refill.
- Don't overfill the pool. Lower water levels reduce water loss from splashing.
- Avoid recreational water toys that require a constant flow of water.

General Principles

- Know where your master water shut-off valve is.
- Encourage your school and local government to develop and promote water conservation.
- Winterize outdoor spigots to avoid bursting pipes.
- Learn how to use your water meter to check for leaks.

Notes
