

Water Conservation

Facts and tips on conserving water

Saving water can help reduce not only demands on the environment, but can also save money on your water bill. The water we use comes from the Mississippi River, then through a chain of lakes and goes through an extensive treatment process to make it safe for us to drink. It's a precious resource and while it seems endless – it is not.

Water conservation is as simple as changing a few small habits. Making small adjustments in your routine can save hundreds of gallons of water.



Outdoors

Outdoor use can account for about half of total household water use (which is roughly 50,000 gallons per year on average). Water usage during the summer months can dramatically increase due to lawn and garden care. Water conservation doesn't mean that your lawn has to be brown. Instead, using some water saving tips can keep your lawn and garden healthy, and your water bill down.

Watering lawns on a fixed schedule is the number one waster of water. Water lawns when they need it. Temperatures, sun exposure, and rainfall in the summer can vary greatly. Waiting till your lawn needs watering can save you time, water and money.

When you do need to water, avoid hot and/or windy days. Otherwise, the water will likely evaporate before it can get to your grass. Ideally water on cooler, cloudier days. Or if during a heat spell, water in the early morning when the lawn is coolest. Letting the water sink in slowly will prevent water from running into gutters and storm drains. Giving water a chance to sink in deep will improve the look and quality of your lawn in addition to not needing to be watered as often.



Questions or Comments?

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Bathrooms

Roughly 66% of indoor water use happens in the bathroom. Taking care of how much water goes down the drain will help reduce your water bill.



Sinks

Standing at the bathroom sink is where most of us get ready in the morning. However, standing there while the water is running can send up to two gallons a minute down the drain. Try turning off the water while brushing your teeth. That can save up to ten gallons of water every time you brush your teeth!

Showers and Bathtubs

A shower can use just as much water as a bath or even more! Most showers today use just over two gallons per minute. Most showers are around eight minutes, which can add up to a lot of water. A long shower uses just as much water or more compared to a full bath. However, a short shower uses less. Taking shorter showers can dramatically save on water.

Toilets

A single flush from a standard toilet uses roughly 2.5 gallons of water on average. A simple way to reduce water use is to not flush things that can easily be thrown in a trash can, such as facial tissues, cigarette butts or even spiders!



Toilets often use more water than necessary. Displacing some of the water in your toilet tank can fool your toilet into using less water. Use a plastic bottle (such as an empty laundry detergent bottle) filled with water and place it in your toilet tank. Be sure to place it away from the flushing mechanism so it doesn't jam.

Hidden toilet leaks are some of the most notorious water wasters. They can quickly leak hundreds of gallons a day down the drain. Checking your toilet for leaks is easy and only takes a few minutes. Drop a small amount of food coloring in your toilet tank. Wait about 30 minutes and check to see if any colored water has leaked into your toilet bowl. If so, you have a leak! It is most likely a flapper leak, a relatively simple fix for an average homeowner, and simple for any plumber.

Kitchens

Dishwashers now average about 6 gallons per load, down nearly 40% from older models. Energy-efficient units can use as little as 3-4 gallons. The best way to save water is to make sure you dishwasher loads are full. A dishwasher uses the same amount of water whether full or half empty. Most modern dishwashers are made to wash un-rinsed dishes. Save water by not pre-rinsing dishes, but scraping excess food into a trash can.

When washing dishes by hand, you can save water by filling one sink with soapy water and filling another with rinse water. The dishes get just as clean and can save you quite a bit of water.

When washing vegetables or fruit, fill the sink with water and wash them all at the same time. Not letting the water run endlessly saves water.

Tap water is perfect for drinking, but letting the faucet run to get cold can waste a lot of water. Keep a pitcher of water in the fridge for nice cold drinking water whenever you want it.

Laundry



Much like dishwashers, many laundry machines use the same amount of water whether full or empty. Modern washers average about 31 gallons per load, and high-efficiency models can use around 15-25 gallons. Making sure that your laundry machine is full ensures you aren't wasting any water. Some laundry machines can adjust the size of the load being washed. Make sure you have it adjusted if you are running less than a full load.