



Save Water, Save Money

As another baseball season begins and we return to our annual ritual of cutting grass and taking care of our lawns, we are reminded that it's "that time of the year again" when we become concerned about water. The hot, dry summer months are just ahead. As we water lawns, fill swimming pools, drink and wash more, water use rises – along with our water bills. There are, however, some ways to save water and reduce our water bills.

By following a few very simple steps around the home, a family of four can save up to 100,000 gallons of water annually and over \$250 every year on its water bills.



Here are some water saving tips that can save you money while you help conserve our water during this time of peak usage:



Indoors:

- Repair leaks in your faucets and toilets. A leaky faucet can waste 20 gallons or more per day. Leaky toilets, even though they are usually silent, can waste hundreds of gallons per day. To find out if your toilet has leaks, put a little food coloring in the tank. If, without flushing, color appears in the bowl, you have a leak that should be repaired. Repairing a faucet is usually as simple as changing an inexpensive washer. Leaky toilets can often be repaired by adjusting the float arm or plunger ball. If a problem persists, call a plumber. It can be a lot cheaper than paying for water you don't even use over a period of time.
- Use your dishwasher and clothes washer only when you have a full load. If you are purchasing a new clothes washer, choose one with variable load or suds-saver options. Many dishwashers are also now available with water-saving options. If you already have these options, use them whenever possible.
- If you are building a new home or remodeling an old one, consider installing "low flush" toilets. These toilets use 1 gallon per flush instead of the 3 to 5 gallons used by conventional ones. They are readily available and, although they cost slightly more, they will save you a lot of money in the long run through decreased water and energy use.



Outdoor uses of water are often high volume. Nevertheless, there are ways you can save water. Try these:

- Attach a pistol-type sprayer to the end of your garden hose. In addition to enabling you to adjust the rate of flow, this device keeps water from continuing to run out during those short periods when you put down the hose without turning it off (while you are washing your car, for example).
- Water your lawn only when necessary. It takes 660 gallons of water to 1,000 square feet of lawn with 1 inch of water (the generally recommended total amount of water grass needs each week). This is nearly the same amount of water you use inside the house in a week! Water your lawn only when needed – e.g. when the grass does not spring back when you step on it - rather than on a set schedule that does not take rainfall into consideration.



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Saving Water in Special Situations

Sometimes it is necessary to use extra measures to reduce even further the amount of water you are using in your house. Although useful in any situation, these techniques may be especially helpful, or even necessary in some cases, when water usage is high or in the unlikely event our water system temporarily can't keep up with demand.

Indoors, consider these changes:



- Take short showers instead of baths. A four-minute shower can use as little as 8 gallons of water, while a bath needs 50 to 60 gallons.
- Avoid unnecessarily flushing your toilet. Never use it as a wastepaper basket to dispose of cigarette butts or tissue paper.
- Turn off the faucet while you are shaving, brushing your teeth, or washing dishes by hand.
- Avoid running water in the shower while you are shampooing or soaping. Most people step away from the water to do this anyway. Many water-saving shower heads come with a button to shut off the flow without changing the mix of hot and cold water.

Outdoors, try these:

- Use mulch around trees and shrubs and in garden beds. This greatly reduces the amount of water lost through evaporation and reduces the need for watering.
- Consider using a drip irrigation system in your garden. This system supplies water only to the root zones of plants. In addition to saving water, it reduces weeding because it doesn't water the areas between rows and hills of crops.
- Use only plant varieties that are well adapted to local conditions. Poorly chosen varieties often need greater amounts of fertilizer and water just to stay alive.
- Reduce, or avoid, watering the lawn. Your lawn may turn brown in the middle of the summer, but this doesn't mean that it's dead. Rather, the grass is dormant and will regrow when rain and cooler weather returns.
- Use the water from your roof downspouts for watering your garden and flower beds.
- Watering in the early morning before the sun is intense helps reduce the water lost from evaporation. Installing rain gutters and collecting water from downspouts also helps reduce water use.
- An irrigation system can be easy to install. Numerous products are readily available for home use. The simplest system consists of a soaker hose that is laid out around the plants and connected to an outdoor spigot. No installation is required and the hose can be moved as needed to water the entire garden. A slightly more sophisticated system is a slotted pipe system.



