

Indoor Water Saving Tips

Indoor water savings can lower water and wastewater (sewer) costs and energy costs too!

Free & Easy

- **Wash only full loads** of laundry in your washing machine or full loads of dishes in your dishwasher.
- **Turn the water off.** Minimize faucet use when shaving, brushing teeth and washing dishes. Replace older bathroom faucet nozzles (aerators) with new ones that are rated at 1.5 gallons per minute, or less.
- **Shorten your shower by one minute.** Cut back on your shower time and you will rack up big savings in water and energy. If you really want to try and save water, limit your shower time to five minutes or less. Also, install a water-saving showerhead that uses 2.5 gallons per minute.
- **Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily.** Dispose of tissues and other similar waste in the trash rather than the toilet.
- **Take showers instead of baths.** A bathtub holds up to 50 gallons of water- much more than a normal shower would use. (A typical shower uses less than 20 gallons.)
- **Don't pre-rinse dishes.** Check to see if your dishwasher can clean dishes without pre-rinsing them. Most newer dishwashers don't require pre-rinsing.
- **Reuse clean household water.** Collect all the water that is wasted while waiting for the hot water to reach your faucet or showerhead. Use this to water your houseplants or outdoor planters.

Some Cost, Greater Savings

- **Fix leaking faucets and toilets.** Research has shown that an average of 8% (or more) of all home water use is wasted through leaks. Dripping faucets can be quickly identified (and repaired) but other leaks are less obvious. Testing for leaks is easy. For example, test for a leaking toilet by lifting the lid off the toilet tank and putting a few drops of food coloring into the bowl. Wait a few minutes, then look in the bowl. If the food coloring has made its way there, you have a leak that needs repair.
- **Replace older toilets with new low-flow models that use 1.6 gallons per flush.** Toilets ten years old or older may be using three-and-a-half to seven gallons per flush.
- **Purchase a new water-efficient clothes washer.** Saves energy too! Rebates up to \$100 are available on qualified models.

Outdoor Water-Saving Tips

Outdoor watering savings can lower summer water bills and keep more water in the rivers for fish and other wildlife. Smart watering also leads to a healthier lawn and garden because it prevents over-watering, a leading cause of pest and disease problems. For more information or to request a home watering guide, call Utilities at 425-452-4127.

Free & Easy

- **Sweep driveways and sidewalks** instead of hosing with water.
- **Cut back unnecessary watering.** Get to know your plants. Trees, shrubs and perennials, if well-established and well-placed, need less water than newly planted areas.
- **Check for soil moisture before watering** to be sure it's time. Dig into the soil with a trowel a few inches. If it feels moist, hold off.
- **Water deeply, but infrequently.** Wetting the soil surface without getting water to the root zone does no good for the plants. The goal is to keep roots moist. But don't over do it. After watering, check the soil to see if moisture has penetrated to the roots. Use what you learn to guide future watering. Then, let the top few inches of the soil dry out between watering so that the roots can breathe.
- **Minimize evaporation loss** by watering early in the day or late at night, and when the wind is calm.
- **Adjust sprinklers** to avoid watering the street, driveway or sidewalks. Choose sprinklers with spray patterns that match the shape of your lawn or garden area.
- **Adjust watering to weather** conditions and avoid watering when it rains.
- **Limit water periods** by setting your kitchen timer to remind you when to turn the water off.
- **Mulch mow your lawn.** Set your mower height at 2-inches and leaving the clippings on the lawn. The clippings help retain moisture. This is also known as grasscycling.
- **Let your lawn go dormant.** Consider letting your lawn go dormant. Water deeply only once a month to keep your lawn alive. To prevent runoff, you may need to water a short time, wait a few minutes, and then restart. Be sure to target your water on areas that receive heavy foot traffic - since dormant grass can be damaged by heavy wear.

Some Cost, Greater Savings

- **Repair leaky faucets, hoses and sprinklers** to avoid water waste.
- **Add shut-off nozzles to your garden hose.** Garden hoses can deliver over ten gallons a minute if left unattended. It all adds up!
- **Select the right watering system.** Drip Irrigation is the best way to water most plantings except lawns. Drip systems apply water directly to the soil with minimal evaporation or runoff. They also help prevent plant diseases and make watering gardens easier. Soaker hoses are another option if used correctly.
- **Use Automatic Sprinkler Systems Efficiently.** Automatically controlled irrigation systems can make efficient watering easier, but they often waste large amounts of water due to improper scheduling or maintenance. Follow these smart-watering tips:
 - Adjust your watering schedule to track weather conditions at least once or twice a

month.

- Install a rain shut-off device to prevent watering during rainy periods. (For sources, check the phone directory business listing under Irrigation Systems and Equipment.)
- Inspect your system a few times each year while it is running. Look for and repair leaking or broken sprinklers, and reposition those that spray areas.
- Hire an irrigation professional to test and adjust your system annually.
- **Mulch your planting beds.** Mulch is a material spread on the soil surface to slow water evaporation loss. It also smothers weeds and keeps soil loose.
- **Improve water penetration in lawn areas.** Help water reach lawn roots by aerating your lawn.
- **Improve your soil.** Add compost throughout your planting areas to add nutrients and increase the soil's ability to absorb and store water.
- **Pick low-water plants.** When you buy plants, choose varieties that require less water for immediate beauty and future water savings. Like any newly planted plants, these plants will need routine water until they're established, which can be one to three years.
- **Group plants with similar water needs together.** Good design avoids mixing plants that need regular water with those that need little to no water.