

Conservation Ideas



Here are some great water-saving tips to help you conserve water and lower your water bill.

Bathroom

- Install a low-flow showerhead that limits the flow from the shower to less than three gallons per minute.
- Take short showers and install a cut-off valve, or turn the water off while washing and back on again only to rinse.
- Reduce the level of the water being used in a bathtub by 1 or 2 inches if a shower is not available.
- Shampoo hair in the shower. Shampooing in the shower takes only a little more water than is used to shampoo hair during a bath, and much less than shampooing and bathing separately.
- When building a new home or remodeling a bathroom, install a new low-volume flush toilet that uses only 1.6 gallons per flush.
- Test toilets for leaks. Add a few drops of food coloring or a dye tablet to the water in the tank, but do not flush the toilet. Watch to see if the coloring appears in the bowl with a few minutes. If it does, the toilet has a silent leak that needs to be repaired.
- Never use the toilet to dispose of cleaning tissues, cigarette butts, or other trash. This wastes a great deal of water and also places an unnecessary load on the sewage treatment plant or septic tank.
- Do not use hot water when cold will do. Water and energy can be saved by washing hands with soap and cold water. Hot water should be added only when hands are especially dirty.

- When brushing teeth, turn the water off until it is time to rinse.
- Do not let the water run when washing hands. Water should be turned off while washing and scrubbing and can be turned on again to rinse. A cut-off valve may be installed on the faucet.
- When shaving, fill the lavatory basin with hot water instead of letting the water run continuously.

Kitchen

- Scrape the dishes clean instead of rinsing them before washing. There is no need to rinse unless they are heavily soiled.
- Use a pan of water (or place a stopper in the sink) for washing and rinsing pots, pans, dishes and cooking implements, rather than turning on the water faucet each time a rinse is needed.
- Never run the dishwasher without a full load. This practice will save water, energy, detergent, and money.
- Use the garbage disposal sparingly or start a compost pile.
- Keep a container of drinking water in the refrigerator. Running water from the tap until it is cool is wasteful. Better still, both water and energy can be saved by keeping cold water in a picnic jug on a kitchen counter to avoid opening the refrigerator door frequently.
- Use a small pan of cold water when cleaning vegetables, rather than letting the water run over them.
- Use only a little water in the pot and put a lid on it for cooking most food. Not only does this method save water, but food is more nutritious since vitamins and minerals are not poured down the drain with the extra cooking water.
- Always keep water conservation in mind, and think of other ways to save in the kitchen. Small kitchen savings from not making too much coffee or letting ice cubes melt in a sink can add up in a year's time.

Laundry

- Wash only a full load when using an automatic washing machine (32 to 59 gallons are required per load).
- Whenever possible, use the lowest water-level setting on the washing machine for light or partial loads.
- Use cold water as often as possible to save energy and to conserve the hot water for uses that cold water cannot serve. (This is also better for clothing made of today's synthetic fabrics.)

Plumbing

- Check water requirements of various models and brands when considering purchasing any new appliances. Some use less water than others.
- Check all water line connections and faucets for leaks. A slow drip can waste as much as 170 gallons of water EACH DAY, or 5,000 gallons per month, and will add to the water bill.
- Learn to repair faucets so that drips can be corrected promptly. It is easy to do, costs very little, and can mean a substantial savings in plumbing and water bills.
- Check for hidden water leakage such as a leak between the water meter and the house. To check, turn off all indoor and outdoor faucets and water-using appliances. The water meter should be read at 10 to 20 minute intervals. If it continues to run or turn, a leak probably exists and needs to be located.
- Insulate all hot water pipes to reduce the delays (and wasted water) experienced while waiting for the water to "run hot".
- Be sure the water heater thermostat is not set too high. Extremely hot settings waste water and energy because the water often has to be cooled with cold water before it can be used.
- Use a moisture meter to determine when houseplants need water. More plants die from over watering than from being on the dry side.

Outdoor Use

- Water only when needed. Look at the grass, feel the soil, or use a soil moisture meter to determine when to water.
- Do not over-water. Soil can absorb only so much moisture, and the rest simply runs off. A timer will help, and either a kitchen timer or an alarm clock will do. One-and-a-half inches of water applied once a week in the summer will keep most Texas grasses alive and healthy.
- Water lawns early in the morning during the hotter summer months. Otherwise, much of the water used on the lawn can simply evaporate between the sprinkler and the grass.
- To avoid excessive evaporation, use a sprinkler that produces large drops of water, rather than a fine mist. Sprinklers that send droplets out on a low angle also help control evaporation.
- Set automatic sprinkler systems to provide thorough, but infrequent watering. Pressure-regulating devices should be set to design specifications. Rain shut-off devices can prevent watering in the rain.
- Use drip irrigation systems for bedded plants, trees, or shrubs, or turn soaker hoses upside-down so the holes are on the bottom. This will help avoid evaporation.
- Forget about watering the streets or walks or driveways. They will never grow a thing.

Provided Courtesy of the San Antonio Water System