

Saving Water inside the home

We can all do our part to lessen the effects of limited water supplies this summer. We can start by conserving the water we use today. Here you will find helpful and common tips for saving water inside your home.

Monitor your water bill

Checking your water bill for unusually high water use can alert you to leaks in your home. Knowing how much water your household typically uses make this easier to determine. If your water use seems high, first determine if the increase is due to changes in your daily routine. If not, you may have a leak.

Periodically test and check for water leaks

If it's easy to find, check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, you probably have a leak. Common household leaks include: running toilets, dripping faucets, and other leaking valves. If leaks are found, repairing them in a timely manner will not only conserve water, but will save you money by reducing your water bill.

Toilet leaks are often easy to detect. One way to check is to remove the tank lid, then drop 1 dye tablet or 10 drops of food coloring into the tank. (*Dye tablets may be available from your local water provider.*) Put the lid back on the toilet tank and come back in 10 to 15 minutes. If the water in the bowl has changed color, you have a leak. If the water hasn't turned a color, everything is okay.

Grabbing a wrench to repair a leaky faucet is simple, inexpensive, and can save up to 140 gallons of water per week. These types of leaks are often caused by faulty washers that don't allow your faucet to shut off properly. Faulty washers can be replaced fairly easily and inexpensively (*typically for less than \$1*), which can help you save water and reduce your water bill.

Wash only full loads

The average American household uses about 23 percent of its water running the clothes washer and dishwasher. Just one partially full load can waste 5 – 10 gallons of water.

Wash fruits and vegetables in a pan of water

Avoid continually running water to clean those fruits and veggies. You can also save water by composting your food, instead of running it down the garbage disposal. You'll save water every time.

Defrost food in the fridge

Rather than using running water to thaw food, for water efficiency as well as food safety, defrost food in the refrigerator.



Keep drinking water in the fridge, re-purpose those ice cubes

Instead of running the tap until the water turns cold, keep a pitcher on hand in the fridge. This way, every drop of water goes down you and not the drain. For those ice cubes that hit the floor instead of your glass, don't toss them. Instead, drop them in a house plant.

Turn off the water faucet while brushing your teeth

Doing so will save up to 4 gallons per minute. That's up to 200 gallons a week for a family of four.

Plug the sink on purpose

When shaving, plug the sink instead of running the water to rinse your razor and save up to 300 gallons per month.

Flush only when necessary

Don't use the toilet to flush tissues. Drop tissues in the trash instead of flushing them.

Shorten your shower

Trimming a minute or two off your normal shower time can save up to 150 gallons per month. Keeping the shower time to less than 5 minutes can save the average household up to 1,000 gallons per month. Turning the water off while washing your hair can save up to 150 gallons a month.

Retrofit old showerheads, faucets, and aerators

You can save up to 40 percent of the water used for showering by replacing an older showerhead with a water efficient model. Look for WaterSense® models, which use less than 2 gallons per minute. Your local water provider may offer water conservation kits that often include a water-efficient showerhead and other water-reducing devices. Replacing old, inefficient faucets and aerators with WaterSense® labeled models can save the average family 700 gallons of water each year, equivalent to 40 showers. Some water suppliers offer indoor water conservation kits that include water-efficient faucet aerators.

Replace that old toilet

By replacing old, inefficient toilets with more water-efficient WaterSense® labeled models, the average family can reduce water used for toilets by 20 to 60 percent – or close to 13,000 gallons of water conserved every year! That's a savings of more than \$110 per year in water costs, and \$2,200 over the lifetime of the toilet. Many municipal water providers offer a rebate for replacing an old toilet with one that uses no more than 1.6 gallons per flush.

Consider a dual-flush toilet

It has two flush options: a half-flush for liquid waste and a full-flush for solid waste. A standard water-efficient toilet uses approximately 1.6 gallons per flush, which is about the amount of water a dual-flush toilet uses for the solid waste option. The half-flush option for liquid waste only uses about 0.9 gallon per flush. An average family of four can save approximately 7,000 gallons per year by switching to a dual-flush toilet.

Determine how much water you use

Access the Alliance for Water Efficiency's water calculator to get an estimate of how much water your household uses. The calculator also compares your estimated water usage to an average home and a highly efficient home. Visit <http://www.home-water-works.org/calculator>.