

Saving Money with Home Water Conservation Tips

In spite of the important role water plays in everyone's daily life, it is taken for granted. Most people do not think much about water as long as water is unlimited in supply and good quality. However, the growing importance of water and energy conservation and the need to reduce wastewater volumes have caused many public officials to become concerned about water conservation. Individual citizens should also be concerned. It is their money that is being lost by wasteful water use! Generally, it is difficult to get people to change established water-wasting habits; therefore, water conservation devices seem to be a more practical way of reducing water use. Once installed, they will save water day in and day out with no thought or effort on the part of the homeowner. Although this information emphasizes water conservation devices, all measures taken to conserve water in all of its uses can be extremely beneficial.

Water Conservation Devices

Plumbing fixtures and systems have always been designed to insure that a more than adequate flow of water would always be available to meet the highest possible water demand. No thought was given to the design of fixtures and systems based more precisely on the needs of the water user. Consequently, pipe sizes and fixture designs have encouraged the use of water far exceeding that really necessary. Water conservation devices help eliminate this waste by allowing only the necessary amounts of water to be used at the plumbing fixture. In most cases the user doesn't even notice that water conservation devices are present. For example, toilets that look and work the same are available using 3.5 gallons (some use as little as 2 gallons) of water every time they are flushed, compared to the 5 gallons required by the conventional non water-saving type. Showerheads are available that deliver a sharp, forceful spray yet automatically reduce shower water use by up to 60 percent.

The major advantages of water conservation devices are:

- 1) They are relatively inexpensive;
- 2) They usually can be installed by the homeowner;
- 3) They are effective in reducing water use, wasteflow, and energy consumption; and
- 4) They are permanent.

The water conservation devices presented in this pamphlet have all of the above advantages.

Home Water Use

Where Your Water Goes

The following table shows amounts of water consumed by average usage. It can help you determine how much water your family uses each day, and how much water you could save by replacing old appliances and fixtures and adopting some "water-wise" habits.

Activity	# of Times	Circumstances	Water Used ²	Total Use
Bathroom				
Toilet	5 flushes ¹	ULV toilet	1.6 gal/flush	8 gal.
		Conventional Toilet	3.5-7 gal/flush	17.5- 35 gal
Shower	One – 8 min. ¹	Low-flow showerhead	2.5 gal/minute	20 gal
		Conventional showerhead	3- 8 gal/minute	24-64 gal
Bath	Once	Tub ¼ to ½ full	9-12 gal	9-12 gal
		Full tub	30-45 gal	30-45 gal
Shaving	Once	1 full basin	1 gal	1 gal
		Open tap, 5 minutes	1.5-7 gpm	7.5-35 gal
Brushing teeth	Twice	Brush and rinse	¼ - ½ gal	¼ - ½ gal
		Open tap, 2 minutes	1.5-7 gpm	3-14 gal
Hand washing	Seven	1 full basin	1 gal	7 gal
		Open tap, 1 minute	1.5-7 gpm	1.5-7 gal
Kitchen				
Cooking	Washing produce	1 full kitchen basin	1-2 gal	1-2 gal
		Open tap, 3 minutes	1.5-7 gpm	4.5-21 gal
Dishwasher	Once-full load	Water-conserving model	4.5-7 gal	4.5-7 gal
		Standard cycle	10-14 gal	10-14 gal
Dishwashing by hand	Once	Full basin/wash & rinse	2-4 gal	2-4 gal
		Open tap for 5 minutes	3-7 gpm	15-35 gal
Miscellaneous				
Laundry	Once	Front-loader (h-axis)	13-20 gal	13-20 gal
		Conventional top-loader	35-50 gal	35-50 gal
Car washing	Once	5 full, 2 gal buckets	10 gal/wash	10 gal
		Hose for 5 min	5/8" hose	32 gal
Lawn watering		During hot dry spells, Kentucky bluegrass will need ¾" of water twice a week, Turf-type tall fescue will need ½"-¾" of water twice a week,* and Buffalo grass will need ½"-¾" every other week.*		
¹ Residential End Uses of Water (American Water Works Association Research Foundation, 1999) ² Handbook of Water Use and Conservation, Amy Vickers (Waterplow Press:Amherst, MA, 2001)				