

Water Conservation Ideas



The drinking water provided to your home is carefully processed to produce a very safe, clean and dependable resource. This valuable asset should not be wasted needlessly. The conservation of this product not only saves water but also saves energy – energy that is needed to heat water and to run many of the appliances in your home.

The bathroom is where you can make the most substantial reduction in your personal water use. Two-thirds of the water used in an average home is used in the bathroom, mostly for flushing toilets, for showers and baths. A lot of that water may be going to the sewer needlessly, adding to that volume of wastewater and putting an extra burden on both the water and wastewater treatment plants.



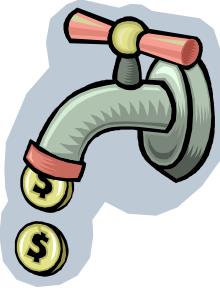
About 3.5 gallons of water goes into the sanitary system every time a toilet is flushed. How can you save water here? Don't use the toilet for things it was not meant for. Toilets should not be used as trash cans to flush away tissues, gum wrappers, cigarette butts, spiders, diapers, or anything else that ought to go in a wastebasket or garbage can. If you have an old toilet it may be using over 5 gallons per flush. Consider changing it to a modern low flow model using only 1.6 gallons per flush.

What about leaks? Toilets are notorious for hidden leaks. Leaks occur when the toilet is out of adjustment or when parts are worn. Most toilet leaks are at the overflow pipe, the water level is usually too high; although the overflow pipe sometimes may leak below the waterline. An experienced "do-it-yourselfer" can make the adjustment for the correct water level. Otherwise, a plumber should be contacted.



Plunger-ball leaks aren't easy to spot. The best way to check is by dropping a little food coloring into the toilet tank. Wait for the color to show up in the bowl. If it does, you probably have a leak at the plunger ball. This is also a fairly simple repair for a "do-it-yourselfer."

Leaks that occur within a customer's house are the responsibility of the customer. If you are uncomfortable making repairs yourself, you might want to hire a competent plumber to do the work for you.



What uses more water? A bath in a tub or a shower? Considering the fact that many people spend 10 to 20 minutes or more in the shower, between 5 and 10 gallons per minute of water can be used when taking a shower. A partially filled tub uses far less water than a long shower, while a short shower uses less than a full tub. Self-control is the key. Consider adding a low flow shower head.

Automatic dishwashers claim the most water in the kitchen, about 12 gallons each run. Make sure the washer is fully loaded before you turn it on. Perhaps you're the dishwasher at your house.

Remember not to wash the dishes with the water running. A sink full of wash water will do the job just as well. Many washing machines use 40 or more gallons of water a load whether you have them stuffed full or have only a couple of socks. If your machine has a water level adjustment, by all means use that feature. Save up for a full load and make your water (and electricity) work efficiently.



A slow drip can add up to 15 to 20 gallons a day, while a 1/16 inch faucet leak wastes 100 gallons in 24 hours! If your faucet is dripping at a rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste 2,700 gallons per year. For a point of interest: 750 gallons of water equals 100 cubic feet. Most leaks, aside from toilets, are in faucets and are most commonly caused by worn washers. Make it a point to check all faucets in the house once or twice a year.

Do you know where your water shutoff valves are located? Most sinks, and toilets in the house have shutoff valves below them that cut off water to that particular fixture. The water heater also has a shutoff valve to cut off hot water to the whole house. Most bathtubs and showers do not have shutoff valves because the plumbing is usually behind the wall. Check your home carefully to locate all of those shutoff valves; see if they work. Most importantly, look for the main shut off valve that turns off the whole house. It's usually located where the water pipe enters into your house. Check to see that the valve works easily. If the valve and plumbing are old and corroded, it could be difficult to turn the valve; sometimes, the valve connection could even break or spring a leak while you are trying to open or close it. If you suspect this valve needs to be replaced or there is a threat of failure it may be necessary to contact your plumber.

