

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

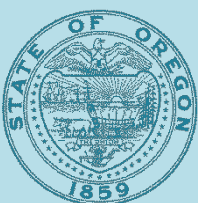
The average American household uses about 23 percent of its water running the clothes washer and dishwasher. Just one partially full load can waste 5 – 10 gallons of water.

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>.

Saving Water outside 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 outside your home.

Adjust sprinklers & water when it's cool

Sprinklers should water your lawn and garden, not the street or sidewalk. Most automatic irrigation timers are set to go off in the early morning (5:00 am – 7:00 am); therefore, utilities must often super-size their facilities to meet early morning demands. Setting irrigation timers at other times of the morning or night (11:00 pm – 5:00 am), when temperatures are cooler, helps minimize evaporation and shave peak water usage.

Inspect your irrigation system

Look for leaks, broken lines, or blockage in the lines. A well maintained system will save you money, time, and water. Even little things like a shut-off nozzle for your garden hose can save you about 5 – 7 gallons each minute.

Water established lawns about 1 inch per week

You may need slightly more during hot, dry weather. Some water providers will use a “*weekly watering number*” that is based on local weather conditions to help customers determine exactly how much water their gardens and landscapes need each week.

Adjust your watering schedule

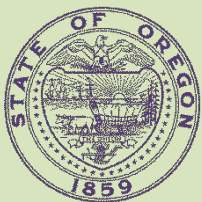
Whether you have a manual or automatic system, be sure to adjust your watering schedule throughout the irrigation season. Adjusting the amount of water used to match weather conditions (watering more when it is hot and dry, less when it is cooler and wet) helps you water your landscape more efficiently.

Apply the amount of water your soil can absorb

Water thoroughly, but infrequently. If runoff or puddling occurs, break longer watering sessions into several short sessions allowing water to soak into the soil between each session.

Consider using water-saving technology

Weather-based irrigation controllers, which act as a thermostat for your sprinkler system, use local weather data to determine when and how much water to use. Soil moisture sensors water plants based on their needs by measuring the amount of moisture in the soil and tailoring the irrigation schedule accordingly. Rainfall shutoff devices and rain sensors help decrease water wasted in the landscape by turning off the irrigation system when it is raining.





☑ Adjust your mower to a higher setting

A taller lawn provides shade to the roots and helps retain soil moisture, so your lawn needs less water.

☑ Aerate your soil

Soil can become compacted during home construction or from normal foot traffic. Aerating your soil with a simple lawn aerator can increase the infiltration of water into the ground, improving water flow to the root zone and reducing water runoff.

☑ Replace lawns

Consider replacing some lawn areas with low water use plants and ornamental grasses. They are easier to maintain than turf, don't need as much water, and look beautiful. Seek out native plants that are appropriate to your local climate and soil conditions. Once established, these plants require little water beyond normal rainfall, are very low maintenance, require little to no pesticides or fertilizer, and are more resistant to pests and diseases than are other species.

☑ Use mulch around shrubs & garden plants

Doing so helps reduce evaporation, inhibit weed growth, moderate soil temperature, and prevent erosion. Types of mulch include bark chips, grass clippings, straw, leaves, stones, and brick chips. Leave a few inches of space between trunks of woody plants and organic mulches to prevent rot.

☑ Group plants together

Creating a garden with "watering zones" allows you to give each plant the water it requires – not too much, not too little.

☑ Minimize or eliminate fertilizer

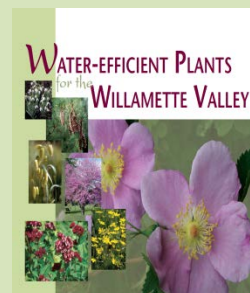
Fertilizer encourages thirsty new growth, causing your landscape to require additional water. Minimize or eliminate the use of fertilizer where possible. If you do need fertilizer, look for a product that contains "natural organic" or "slow-release" ingredients. These fertilizers feed plants slowly and evenly, helping to create healthier plants with strong root systems and no excessive "top growth." Moreover, using "slow-release" fertilizers can reduce nutrient run-off into ground and surface waters, protecting natural resources.

☑ Use a broom and a bucket

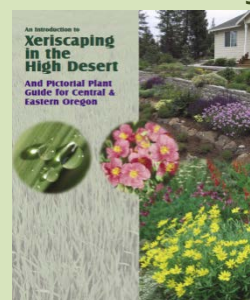
Sweep patios, sidewalks and driveways clean with a broom, instead of using a hose. Instead of using a running hose, fill a bucket with water to wash your car. A hose equipped with a shut-off nozzle would also work.

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