



Residential Water Use Efficiency

Water is essential to our health, our communities, our environment, and our economy. As our state population grows, the demand for water will continue to rise. Not only must water systems ensure a safe and clean supply of water, but they also must ensure that there is enough water available to supply their customers every day of the year.

Water is a shared resource. Other uses include agriculture, fish habitat, industry, hydropower, and recreation. All of these uses add up and can put enormous pressure on local water supplies, especially during summer when the demand is highest.

Depleting reservoirs and groundwater can put water supplies, human health, and the environment at serious risk. Lower water levels can contribute to higher concentrations of natural or human pollutants. Using water more efficiently helps maintain supplies at safe levels, protecting human health and the environment.

The tips you'll find within this brochure are designed to not only save water, but also save you money on your water, energy/gas, and wastewater bills. Maybe all three!

Eliminating Waste Makes Sense

Public water systems are the second largest water user in the state. They use about 18% annually of the total amount of freshwater withdrawn from surface and groundwater sources. By comparison, agriculture uses about 60% of the state's water every year, while industry and hydropower use about 8%.

A lot of hard work goes into providing the water that comes out of your tap every day. When the Department of Health adopted new water efficiency regulations in 2007, many water systems took notice and began to re-think just how efficient they can be. Now more than ever, they are taking action to find and fix leaks in their water distribution system, thereby eliminating waste.

DID YOU KNOW?

The average person unknowingly wastes up to 30 gallons of water every day.



Think of “water efficiency” as a way to eliminate wasteful water practices and promote the long-term goal of saving water. Wasteful water practices are unnecessary and costing you money.

By making just a few small changes to your daily routine, you can save a significant amount of water, money, and preserve water supplies for the future.

As a customer of a water utility, think about:

- How much water is necessary for a specific purpose or task.
- How you can help minimize the impact of water use on local water supplies.

Ask yourself what you can do to eliminate wasteful practices and **use only what you need!**

- ◆ **Is your toilet leaking or faucet dripping?**
If yes, then stop wasting water and fix it right away—or have someone fix it for you.
- ◆ **Do you leave the water on when brushing your teeth or doing the dishes?**
If yes, make a conscious decision to stop wasting water. Change your habits and turn it off.
- ◆ **Are you watering your lawn too often?**
If you're not sure, evaluate how much water your lawn needs and adjust watering times.
- ◆ **Did you really need that much water to accomplish the task?**
No matter what it is you're doing, always ask yourself if you need that much water. Stop wasting water!

Water Waste Adds Up: Drops Turn Into Gallons		
Count the number of drips in 30 seconds to see how many gallons is wasted.		
	1 Day	1 Year
5 drops	0.8	292
10 drops	1.6	584
15 drops	2.4	876
20 drops	3.2	1,168
25 drops	4	1,460
30 drops	4.8	1,752

Go Green: Reduce Energy and Water Use

It takes a lot of energy to treat and deliver the water to everyone in your community. Considerable amounts of energy also go to heat water for laundry, bathing, cooking, dishwashing, and cleaning our homes. Homes with electric water heaters use 25% of their electricity to heat water.

DID YOU KNOW?

About 4% of the nation's electricity consumption is used moving or treating water and wastewater.



Look for the WaterSense Label

WaterSense is a program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Much like the ENERGY STAR symbol for energy-efficient products and practices, WaterSense is the symbol for water-efficient products, services, and practices.

WaterSense helps consumers identify products that meet EPA's criteria for water efficiency and performance. WaterSense labeled products use 20% less than standard products.

Best of all, they work!

All WaterSense labeled products have been tested to ensure savings and performance. Look for WaterSense labeled products and start saving water today!



Visit www.epa.gov/watersense to learn more.

DID YOU KNOW?

If a family of four replaces its older, inefficient toilets with new WaterSense toilets, it could save more than 16,000 gallons per year and \$2,000 in water and wastewater bills over the lifetime of the toilets.



One of the simplest ways to save both water and energy is to install water-efficient plumbing fixtures. This will save you money on your water and energy bills—it takes less energy to heat less water.

Look for WaterSense labeled products to save the most money. You can let these products do the saving for you!

- ◆ **High Efficiency Toilets** use 1.28 gallons per flush or less. Plus, they now have flush ratings that can tell you just how well they perform.
- ◆ **Faucet aerators** are very inexpensive and easy to install.
- ◆ **Low-flow showerheads.** Look for those that use 2 gallons per minute or less.
- ◆ **High Efficiency Washing machines.** Look for ENERGY STAR rated machines with low water use per load (water factor of 4.5 or lower).

DID YOU KNOW?

Gardening professionals agree that most lawns and yards receive more water than they need. Over-watering creates runoff that carries toxic fertilizers and pesticides into our streams, rivers, and lakes—where it can contaminate drinking water supplies too!



\$\$ Great Water/Money Saving Tips \$\$

Visit these Web sites to find rebates near you or simply ask your water or wastewater utility if they offer rebates.

http://www.epa.gov/watersense/rebate_finder_saving_money_water.html

www.greenplumbersusa.com/green-plumber-water-rebates-in-your-area

Install moisture control sensors or rain sensors on your automated irrigation systems. These devices know when to water your lawn, keeping it healthy and green. Best of all they can substantially reduce your water bill and save a ton of water.

Leak Repair

Many homes waste (and pay for) thousands of gallons of water each year because they don't fix leaks that can be easily repaired. Fix it yourself or ask a friend to help you.

DID YOU KNOW?

In one year, water leaks in your home can waste enough water to fill a backyard swimming pool.



Replacement parts are inexpensive and can save you more than 10% on your water bill. In most cases, fixing a leaky toilet should cost you about \$10 or less in parts.

You can fix most dripping faucets or showerheads by replacing worn washers. To check your toilet for leaks,

drop food coloring in the toilet tank. If color appears in the bowl without flushing, you have a leak.

Water Saving Ideas

- Collect rainwater to irrigate indoor/outdoor plants.
- Install WaterSense labeled low-flow showerheads and save 3 gallons per minute.
- Take shorter showers by 2-3 minutes and save up to 10 gallons per shower.
- If you don't like mowing your yard, get rid of it and replace it with native or drought resistant (xeriscape) landscaping.
- Install WaterSense labeled low-flow fixtures or aerators for every faucet in the house.
- Most landscapes will do well being watered two or three times per week.
- To reduce evaporation, water the lawn in the early morning or evening. Watering during the heat of the day, or when it's windy, wastes water and is much less effective.
- Place a 2" to 4" layer of mulch around plants and trees to avoid excess evaporation and retain moisture.
- Consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water or wash your car on your lawn.
- Sell your lawn mower and use that money as a down payment to replace your lawn with a flower or vegetable garden.
- Protect water quality by limiting or eliminating the use of fertilizers, weed killers, and pesticides.
- Install micro/drip irrigation systems or use soaker hoses to water outdoors.

How You Can Help

Understanding what you can do to save water is where it all begins. You can get the biggest water savings in your home by installing WaterSense fixtures and fixing leaks.

Since outdoor use often doubles in the summertime, use the tips in this brochure to think about what you can do to use less while still maintaining a healthy landscape. Limiting the use of fertilizers and pesticides will also help keep water clean and protect public health.

Using less water leaves more of it in the ground or in our streams, rivers, and lakes. This benefits the environment and provides recreational opportunities for you and your community.

Do what you can to avoid unnecessary water use. You will contribute to the long-term health, adequate future water supply, and sustainability of your watershed!

To learn more about how you can use water efficiently, contact your local water system for more information or visit our website at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater/WaterSystemDesignandPlanning/WaterUseEfficiency.aspx>

More Information

Washington State Department of Health
Office of Drinking Water
360-236-3100 • 800-521-0323

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater.aspx>



DOH 331-450
April 2010