

Conservation Corner

Saving Water – Tips for Residential Use

Laundry

When doing laundry, always wash full loads.

- Adjust the water level in the washer to the amount needed for the load. Some of the new efficient washers will do this automatically.

When it's time to replace the clothes washer, choose an energy- and water-efficient model.

- **Energy Star labeled washers** use 25 percent less energy and 33 percent less water than other washers. These models only use 14 gallons of water to thoroughly clean a load of laundry, while non-labeled washers use 20 gallons per load.

Dishwashing

If washing dishes by hand, fill the sink with water rather than continually running the tap.

Install an efficient dishwasher.

- Technological advances in dishwashers make it possible to use less water to achieve the same goal. **Standard Energy Star labeled dishwashers** use 3.5 gallons or less per cycle and can save an average of 3,870 gallons over the course of their lifetime. These models also use less energy than non-labeled dishwashers.
- Dishwashers use less water than hand washing, particularly if you limit pre-rinsing.
- For an updated list of efficient dishwasher models and their water and energy use, visit <https://library.cee1.org/content/qualifying-product-lists-residential-dishwashers>

Only wash full loads of dishes in the dishwasher.

Avoid using running water to thaw frozen foods. Instead, defrost in the refrigerator overnight.

Faucets

Find and fix any leaky faucets.

- A faucet leaking 60 drops per minute will waste 192 gallons (726.8 liters) per month. That is equal to 2,304 gallons (8.7 m³) per year.

Install efficient faucets and/or faucet aerators.

- The U.S. EPA WaterSense program labels **efficient faucets and aerators** that use a maximum of 1.5 gallons (5.7 liters) per minute.
- Look for the WaterSense label when selecting new faucets or aerators.

Turn off the faucet when lathering hands, shaving, or brushing teeth.

Landscaping

If an irrigation system is used, make sure it is properly set up and maintained.

- Install a **WaterSense-labeled weather-based irrigation controller**.
- Install and maintain a rain sensor, either wireless or wired, on the irrigation controller if it does not have one built-in.
- Regularly inspect the sprinkler heads to make sure they are not damaged or malfunctioning.
- Adjust sprinklers so they are not spraying water on paved surfaces such as the sidewalk or driveway.

Landscape with water-wise landscaping principles.

- Use native plants or plants that require little water to thrive in your region.
- Plant turf grass only in areas where people will use it actively for recreation.
- Organize your landscape into hydrozones with a distinct watering schedule for each. Hydrozones are areas of landscape with plant and vegetation that have similar water requirements. This prevents over-watering some plants and under-watering others.
- Keep soil healthy and add mulch to prevent water loss through evaporation.
- If watering with a hose, make sure it has a shut-off nozzle.
- Water in the morning to prevent water loss due to evaporation. Avoid watering when it is windy.
- Use a rain barrel to collect water for use in the landscape.
- Add a graywater system to collect water from your washing machine, shower, or bath, and use it in the landscape.

Showers

If it takes a long time for the hot water to reach the shower, use it as an opportunity to collect water for other uses, such as watering houseplants.

Replace inefficient showerheads with WaterSense-labeled models.

Take shorter showers.

- Reducing a 10-minute shower to 5 minutes will save 12.5 gallons of water (47.3 liters) if the showerhead has a flow rate of 2.5 gallons (9.5 liters) per minute, and even more if the showerhead has a higher flow rate.

Toilets

Replace inefficient toilets with WaterSense-labeled models.

- Replacing an older toilet that uses 3.5 gallons (13.2 liters) per flush (gpf) with a high-efficiency toilet that uses 1.28 gpf (4.85 liters) will save 2.22 gpf (8.4 Lpf). The **EPA WaterSense program labels toilets** that use a maximum of 1.28 gpf.
- Some older toilets may use as much as 7 gallons (26.5 liters) per flush.

Check toilets to verify they are working properly.

- Make sure the water level is not too high, the fill valve is working properly, and the flapper is not leaking. A running toilet can waste hundreds of gallons of water per day.