

Tips to Saving Water at Home

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Saving Water Indoors

For the average household, reducing water use by one-third or more is possible just by following the steps outlined below. The bathroom is a key area on which to focus as nearly 65 percent of all indoor water use occurs there.

1. Toilets: Toilets consume the most water inside the home.

- Check for leaks. Put a few drops of food coloring in your toilet tank. If the coloring appears within 30 minutes without flushing you have a leak that may waste up to 52,800 gallons a year.
- Flush toilets less often. Do not use them as ashtrays or wastebaskets.
- Toilet Dams. Place plastic bottles filled with water in your toilet tank. This can save 11 gal of water per day. Avoid bricks that can damage the tank.
- Ultra-Low Flush Toilets. Installing an ultra low flush toilet can save more than 5 gal per flush.

2. Use less water.

- Turn off faucets completely and reduce the amount of water used for hand washing, brushing teeth, shaving, and showering.
- Water-saving shower heads save up to 5 gal a minute.
- Faucet aerators saving between 3 and 17 gal per day.
- When washing dishes by hand, don't leave the rinse water running.
- Fully load your washing machine and dishwasher.
- Purchase Energy Star approved washing machines. Where possible, purchase Energy Star approved machines. Front-loading washing machines tend to be more efficient.

3. Check for leaks.

- Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, faucets and couplings. Leaks can be costly. A leak of only one drop per second wastes about 2,643 gal of water per year. Read 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 have a leak.
- Fixing leaks is usually less expensive than paying for wasted water.

4. Hot Water Heater.

- Purchase an Energy Star approved water heater.
- Insulate hot water pipes and water heater using foam pipe insulation, water heater jackets, or other approved insulation materials.

5. Reuse Wastewater.

- Never let water go down the drain when there may be another use for it such as watering a plant or cleaning. For example, when washing off fruit or vegetables, place a bucket under the faucet. Use the water collected in the bucket to water plants.

Saving Water Outdoors

1. Cleaning

- Use a sweeper or broom to clean the garage, driveway, floors or sidewalk instead of a hose. Unnecessary use of a hose wastes 264 gal of water per hour.
- When using a hose, outfit it with a shut-off nozzle and when finished, “turn it off” at the faucet instead of at the nozzle to avoid leaks.
- Wash your car on the lawn with a bucket of water and a sponge.

2. Garden

- Don't over water your lawn and garden. Outdoor landscapes, which receive 58% of urban water — more than all indoor appliances combined — are typically over-watered by 30% to 300%.
- Plant low maintenance landscape with native species adapted to live in your climate conditions (xeriscaping).
- Water the roots of plants, not the leaves.
- Water lawns early or late in the day when temperature and wind are the lowest to reduce losses from evaporation (early morning is usually recommended to minimize mildew, etc.).
- Adjust sprinklers to water lawns and not pavement.
- Use drip hoses where possible instead of sprinklers, which can lose water to evaporation and inaccurate targeting of water.
- Do not leave sprinklers or hoses unattended. Outdoor faucets can flow at rate of more than 264 gal per hour. Use irrigation timers.

Saving Energy by Saving Water

- If one out of every 100 American homes were retrofitted with water-efficient fixtures, we could save about 100 million kWh of electricity per year - avoiding 80,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions. That is equivalent to removing nearly 15,000 automobiles from the road a year.
- If 1 percent of American homes replaced an older toilet with a high-efficiency toilet, the country would save more than 38 million kWh of electricity - enough to supply more than 43,000 households electricity for one month.
- Running your faucet for five minutes uses as much energy as running a 60W incandescent bulb for 14 hours.
- Turn your water heater down to 120° or the "Normal" setting when home, and to the lowest setting when away. Water heating accounts for about 13% of home energy costs.
- When possible, wash clothes in cold water. About 90% of the energy use in a clothes washer goes to water heating.
- Run your dishwasher and clothes washer only when fully loaded. Fewer loads reduce energy and water use.

The Obed Community Association has as its purpose community appreciation and volunteer involvement in ongoing appreciation for our natural and cultural heritage of the Obed River watershed within Cumberland County. Louise Gorenflo, OWCA community educator, produced this fact sheet. Those wanting to join this membership organization or more information may contact OWCA at 484-9033 or at 185 Hood Drive, Crossville, TN 38555.