Water Saving Tips

Inside The Home:

~When you are washing your hands, don't let the water run while you lather.

~ Replace your old toilet. If your home was built before 1992 and the toilet has never been replaced, it is very likely that you do not have a water efficient 1.6 gallon per flush toilet.

~Check for toilet tank leaks by adding food coloring to the tank. If the toilet is leaking, color will appear within 30 minutes. Check the toilet for worn out, corroded or bent parts. Most replacement parts are inexpensive, readily available and easily installed. (Flush as soon as test is done, since food coloring may stain tank.)

~If the toilet flush handle frequently sticks in the flush position, letting water run constantly, replace or adjust it.

~Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects and other such waste in the trash rather than the toilet.

~Listen for dripping faucets and toilets that flush themselves. Fixing a leak can save 500 gallons each month.

~Take shorter showers. Replace your showerhead with an ultra-low-flow version. Some units are available that allow you to cut off the flow without adjusting the water temperature knobs.

~If your shower can fill a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, then replace it with a water-efficient showerhead.

~Use the minimum amount of water needed for a bath by closing the drain first and filling the tub only 1/3 full. The initial burst of cold water can be warmed by adding hot water later.

~Don't let water run while shaving or washing your face. Brush your teeth first while waiting for water to get hot, then wash or shave after filling the basin.

~Retrofit all wasteful household faucets by installing aerators with flow restrictors.

~Operate automatic dishwashers and clothes washers only when they are fully loaded or properly set the water level for the size of load you are using.

~ When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.

~Designate one glass for your drinking water each day. This will cut down on the number of times you run your dishwasher.

~Store drinking water in the refrigerator rather than letting the tap run every time you want a cool glass of water.

~Do not use running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods. Defrost food overnight in the refrigerator or by using the defrost setting on your microwave.

~Kitchen sink disposals require lots of water to operate properly. Start a compost pile as an alternate method of disposing food waste instead of using a garbage disposal. Garbage disposals also can add 50% to the volume of solids in a septic tank which can lead to malfunctions and maintenance problems.

~Throw trimmings and peelings from fruits and vegetables into your yard compost to prevent from using the garbage disposal.

~Consider installing an instant water heater on your kitchen sink so you don't have to let the water run while it heats up. This will reduce heating costs for your household.

~Insulate your water pipes. You'll get hot water faster plus avoid wasting water while it heats up.

~Never install a water-to-air heat pump or air-conditioning system. Air-to-air models are just as efficient and do not waste water.

~Install water softening systems only when necessary. Save water and salt by running the minimum amount of regenerations necessary to maintain water softness. Turn softeners off while on vacation.

~If buying a new washing machine, buy a front loading washer; these use 1/3 less water than to loaders.

~When you shop for a new appliance, consider one offering cycle and load size adjustments. They are more water and energy-efficient than older appliances.

~ Never put water down the drain when there may be another use for it such as watering a plant or garden, or cleaning.

~Verify that your home is leak-free, because many homes have hidden water leaks. 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, there is a leak.

~Check your pump. If you have a well at your home, listen to see if the pump kicks on and off while the water is not in use. If it does, you have a leak.

~When adjusting water temperatures, instead of turning water flow up, try turning it down. If the water is too hot or cold, turn the offender down rather than increasing water flow to balance the temperatures.

~Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. If your faucet is dripping at the rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste 2,700 gallons per year which will add to the cost of water and sewer utilities, or strain your septic system.

~Wash your produce in the sink or a pan that is partially filled with water instead of running water from the tap.

~When you clean your fish tank, use the water you've drained on your plants. The water is rich in nitrogen and phosphorus, providing you with a free and effective fertilizer.

~Make sure you know where your master water shut-off valve is located. This could save gallons of water and damage to your home if a pipe were to burst.

~Make sure there are aerators on all of your faucets.

~Bathe your young children together.

~To save water and time, consider washing your face or brushing your teeth while in the shower.

~Cook food in as little water as possible. This will also retain more of the nutrients.

~When you give your pet fresh water, don't throw the old water down the drain. Use it to water your trees or shrubs.

~If you accidentally drop ice cubes when filling your glass from the freezer, don't throw them in the sink. Drop them in a house plant instead.

~When you have ice left in your cup from a take-out restaurant, don't throw it in the trash, dump it on a plant.

~While staying in a hotel or even at home, consider reusing your towels.

Outside The Home:
~Water lawns during the early morning hours when temperatures and wind speed are the lowest. This reduces losses from evaporation.

~Don't water your street, driveway or sidewalk. Position your sprinklers so that your water lands on the lawn and shrubs ... not the paved areas.

~Install sprinklers that are the most water-efficient for each use. Micro and drip irrigation and soaker hoses are examples of water-efficient methods of irrigation.

~Raise the lawn mower blade to at least three inches. A lawn cut higher encourages grass roots to grow deeper, shades the root system and holds soil moisture better than a closely-clipped lawn.

~Aerate your lawn. Punch holes in your lawn about six inches apart so water will reach the roots rather than run off the surface.

~Avoid over fertilizing your lawn. The application of fertilizers increases the need for water. Apply fertilizers which contain slow-release, water-insoluble forms of nitrogen.

~Mulch to retain moisture in the soil. Mulching also helps to control weeds that compete with plants for water.

~Plant native and/or drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees. Once established, they do not need to be watered as frequently and they usually will survive a dry period without any watering. Group plants together based on similar water needs.

~Do not hose down your driveway or sidewalk. Use a broom to clean leaves and other debris from these areas. Using a hose to clean a driveway can waste hundreds of gallons of water.

~Outfit your hose with a shut-off nozzle which can be adjusted down to fine spray so that water flows only as needed. When finished, "Turn it Off" at the faucet instead of at the nozzle to avoid leaks.

~Use hose washers between spigots and water hoses to eliminate leaks.

~Do not leave sprinklers or hoses unattended. Your garden hoses can pour out 600 gallons or more in only a few hours, so don't leave the sprinkler running all day. Use a kitchen timer to remind yourself to turn it off.

~Check all hoses, connectors and spigots regularly.

~Use the sprinkler for larger areas of grass. Water small patches by hand to avoid waste.

~Consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water. If you wash your own car, park on the grass to do so.

~Wash your car with a bucket, sponge, and hose with a shut-off valve

~Use a hose nozzle and turn off the water while you wash your car and save more than 100 gallons.

~Avoid the installation of ornamental water features (such as fountains) unless the water is recycled. Locate where there are mineral losses due to evaporation and wind drift.

~If you have a swimming pool, consider a new water-saving pool filter. A single back flushing with a traditional filter uses from l80 to 250 gallons or more of water.

~Install covers on pools and spas and check for leaks around your pumps.

~Periodically check your pool for leaks if you have an automatic refilling device.

~Use a grease pencil to mark the water level of your pool at the skimmer. Check the mark 24 hours later. Your pool should lose no more than 1/4 inch each day.

~Make sure your swimming pools, fountains, and ponds are equipped with recirculating pumps.

~When backwashing your pool, consider using the water on your landscaping.

~Avoid planting turf in areas that are hard to water such as steep inclines and isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways.

~Only water your lawn when needed. You can tell this by simply walking across your lawn. If you leave footprints, it's time to water.

~Use porous materials for walkways and patios to keep water in your yard and prevent wasteful runoff

~Buy a rain gauge to track how much rain or irrigation your yard receives. Check with your local water agency to see how much rain is needed to skip an irrigation cycle.

~Set a kitchen timer when watering your lawn or garden with a hose.

~Use a screwdriver as a soil probe to test soil moisture. If it goes in easily, don't water. Proper lawn watering can save thousands of gallons of water annually.

~When the kids want to cool off, use the sprinkler in an area where your lawn needs it the most.

~Winterize outdoor spigots when temps dip to 20 degrees F to prevent pipes from bursting or freezing.

~Leave lower branches on trees and shrubs and allow leaf litter to accumulate on top of the soil. This keeps the soil cooler and reduces evaporation.

~Use sprinklers that throw big drops of water close to the ground. Smaller drops of water and mist often evaporate before they hit the ground.

~Bathe your pets outdoors in an area in need of water.

~Place an empty tuna can on your lawn to catch and measure the water output of your sprinklers. For lawn watering advice, contact your local conservation office.

~Have your plumber re-route your gray water to trees and gardens rather than letting it run into the sewer line. Check with your city codes, and if it isn't allowed in your area, start a movement to get that changed.

~Collect rain water from a shed roof gutter into a barrel.

~consider replacing your grass with drought-resistant plants and ground cover. You'll save water and time spent on upkeep.

~Newly planted trees need two to three centimeters of water per week, for the first two seasons. During the first five years, trees only need to be watered every two to three weeks during a dry period, or once a month for older trees.

In The Garden:
~ Water only what your plants need – Most water is wasted in your garden by watering when your plants do not need the water

~Plant during the spring or fall when the watering requirements are lower.

~Minimize evaporation by watering during the early morning hours, when temperatures are cooler and winds are lighter.

~Remember to weed your lawn and garden regularly. Weeds compete with other plants for nutrients, light, and water.

~Divide your watering cycle into shorter periods to reduce runoff and allow for better absorption every time you water.

~Direct downspouts and other runoff towards shrubs and trees, or collect and use for your garden.

~Water only as rapidly as the soil can absorb the water.

~For hanging baskets, planters and pots, place ice cubes under the moss or dirt to give your plants a cool drink of water and help eliminate water overflow.

~Follow the land by watching the rain as it falls onto it. The contours of the land can be changed to catch rainwater, and speed or slow it's flow, holding it in the ground for use by plants.

General Water Saving Tips:
~Be aware and follow water use restrictions in your area. Don't assume, even if you get your water from a private well, that you need not observe good water use rules, every drop counts!

~Create an awareness of the need for water conservation among your children. Avoid the purchase of recreational water toys which require a constant stream of water.

~Teach your children to turn the faucets off tightly after each use.

~Be aware of and follow all water conservation and water shortage rules and restrictions which may be in effect in your area.

~Encourage your employer to promote water conservation at the workplace. Suggest that water conservation be put in the employee orientation manual and training program.

~Patronize businesses which practice and promote water conservation.

~Report all significant water losses (broken pipes, open hydrants, errant sprinklers, abandoned free-flowing wells, etc.) to the property owner, local authorities or your Water Management District.

~Encourage your school system and local government to help develop and promote a water conservation ethic among children and adults.

~Support projects that will lead to an increased use of reclaimed waste water for irrigation and other uses.

Interesting Facts:
~Approximately 1000 kilograms of water is required to grow 1 kilogram of potatoes.

~A 5-minute shower with a standard shower head uses 100 litres of water.

~One litre of oil can contaminate up to 2 million litres of water.

~During the summer, about half of all treated water is sprayed onto lawns and gardens.

~Of the total world's freshwater supply, about one-third is found underground

~Approximately 300 litres of water is required to produce 1 kilogram of paper.

~A single lawn sprinkler spraying 19 litres per minute uses 50% more water in just one hour than a combination of ten toilet flushes, two 5-minute showers, two dishwasher loads, and a full load of clothes.

~Less than 3% of the water produced at a large municipal water treatment plant is used for drinking purposes.

~Each day humans must replace 2.4 litres of water, some through drinking and the rest taken by the body from the foods eaten.

~Approximately 60% of Canada's fresh water drains north, while 85% of the population lives along the southern border with the United States.

~Hoses use almost 30 litres of water a minute.

~One hour of lawn watering uses 833 litres.

~The human body is about 75% water.
~Tomatoes are 90% water, Potatoes 80% water, and chickens 75% water.

~It takes about 5320 litres of water to process a meal of a 1/4lb. Hamburger, French fries, and a soft drink.

~Less than 1% of the Earth's water is available for human consumption.