

WATER CONSERVATION

Kentucky Division of Water

Why save water?

Only 1% of the water on our planet is safe, drinkable water. As our population grows, more and more people are using up this limited resource which means that we need to conserve as much as possible by getting into good water-using habits every day. Water conservation means doing as much as we can to not waste water when we use it. We can all help reduce waste by making small behavioral changes and by choosing more water efficient products. Check out our overview of water saving tips and advice:

At Home

Check for Leaks:

- Faucets and water-using appliances that leak are the biggest water wasters in the home. Most faucet leaks are caused by worn-out washers, parts that are inexpensive to repair. In the majority of cases, the worn-out washers are easily replaced.
- To check for toilet leaks, put about a dozen drops of red food coloring (be sure not to use any type of dye) into the toilet tank. Wait 10 to 15 minutes. If no coloring shows up in the bowl, you have a leak free toilet. Color in the bowl means you need to check the flushing mechanism.

In the Bathroom

Toilets

- When you must install a new fixture, investigate new toilet systems. Some use only a few quarts of water. Some, such as composting toilets, may use no water. Still other systems use “grey water” (water from the bathtub or washing machine) instead of using clean drinking water to flush.
- Create a displacement device inside the tank. Cut the top off a plastic gallon jug. Put some clean, heavy stones in the bottom part of the jug and place it in the tank where it won't get in the way of the moving parts of the toilet. If you use a smaller plastic bottle, you may not need to cut the top off. Just fill the bottle with some water and stones and place it in the tank. Every time the toilet is flushed, you save the amount of water that remains in the jug or bottle.

Showers

- Take shorter showers to save more water.
- Install flow-control inserts. These are inexpensive and usually fairly simple to install. They may cut the flow to as little as 2.75 gallons a minute. However, in areas that have low water pressure, the results may not be as good.
- Install a low-flow shower head.
- As you run the water until it heats up enough for shower, collect the water in a bucket for watering plants.

Bathtubs

- Don't spill water through the over-flow pipe.
- Bathe with less water.
- Make sure the stopper is water tight.
- Put the stopper in the tub before you turn on the water. As water heats up, it will mix with the colder water and warm it.

Bathroom Sink

- Don't let the tap run.
- Install a water-saving tap device. Flow restrictors restrict the amount of water that flows out of the tap. Spray taps spray the water like a miniature shower and make washing and rinsing operations handier and more efficient. Aerators mix air with water to reduce the flow. Combined spray tap-aerators combine both features.

In the Kitchen

Food Preparation

- Fill the sink or a container for washing, rinsing, or peeling vegetables. Don't let the water run.
- Do not measure out more water than necessary when cooking.
- Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator rather than under hot running water.

Washing Dishes

- If washing by hand, don't let the water run continuously.
- If you have a sink garbage disposal unit, use it sparingly. Accumulate waste and dispose of it in the garbage can.

In the Laundry

- Use water-saving settings if available on the machine.
- Set the water level to the size of the wash load.
- Wash only with full loads.
- Wash only when clothes are dirty, not just to remove wrinkles.
- Use low-foam detergents. They requires less water for rinsing and have no effect on cleaning power.

Household Cleaning

- Clean up spills and remove spots as quickly as possible to avoid having to mop floors or shampoo carpets too often.
- Vacuum rugs regularly to prevent the need from frequent shampooing.

Outside the House

Outdoor Tasks

- Use a broom rather than a hose and water for the driveway, patio, sidewalks, and garage floor
- If you wash your car, consider using a mild detergent and parking the car on the grass. Use a bucket of water to wash the car, then rinse quickly with the hose.
- For a swimming pool, spa, or Jacuzzi, clean the filter and maintain properly to avoid having to replace water often.
- If you have a swimming pool, spa, or Jacuzzi, and it's outdoors, cover it when not in use to prevent evaporation.
- Choose plants that are native to the particular region where they will be planted so that they will be adaptable to the amount of available water.
- Group plants that need similar amounts of water .
- Mulch plants and small trees to retain moisture in the soil for a longer time.
- Pull weeds to eliminate competition for water.
- When watering lawns, remember the general rule: water slowly, deeply, and infrequently.
- Don't water on windy days if you can.
- Use a soaker hose or trickle or drip irrigation system or device to put water closer to the roots instead of spraying it into the air where it can be lost to evaporation.

- If you use a sprinkler, choose one that sprays low and with large drops. Position it so that it waters the lawn, not the driveway or sidewalk.
- Mow the lawn often, and don't rake the clippings. Frequent mowing will produce fewer, less dense clippings that will provide shade and mulch for roots, thus requiring less water.
- Avoid over-fertilizing the lawn. Apply fertilizers that contain slow release, water insoluble forms of nitrogen.

