

Water Saving Strategies



Council takes its responsibilities to the community and the environment seriously.

Water conservation means looking after our resources and protecting the environment. Council is committed to working with the community to preserve valuable water resources, providing a number of resources and actively facilitating water-saving initiatives which promote water, sewer and associated efficiencies.

SAVING WATER IN THE HOUSE

We use a huge amount of water inside the home through everyday tasks. Here are some ways to reduce water use in your home, from the use of water-efficient technologies, to making small changes in the way you do things.

BATHROOM

Around 40% of all water used in the home is used in the bathroom. About three-quarters of that goes towards washing ourselves.

Before buying new bathroom appliances, check the manufacturer's water efficiency labels. By selecting more water-efficient products, you can save money on water and electricity bills and help the environment.

Tips for the shower

Water-efficient showerheads use less than 9 litres of water a minute, while their older-style counterparts use up to 20 litres a minute. By using a water-efficient showerhead, you could save up to 50 litres per shower.

Other ideas are:

- Take shorter showers; limit time spent on soaping up, washing down and rinsing off.
- Use a shower timer. Choose a manual 4-minute egg timer or an electronic timer that attaches to the wall or showerhead. For those who enjoy singing, 4 minutes is the average length of a song on the radio.
- Capture water in a bucket while you are waiting for the hot water to heat up and use it in your garden. Your plants will love it.

Tips for the bath

Many people believe baths waste a lot of water, but in many instances, taking a bath may use less water than showering. If you love soaking in the tub, consider these simple tips to ensure you are using your bath water wisely.

- Only fill the tub with as much water as needed. Use less water for children.
- Check the temperature as the tub fills. Adding extra water to get the correct temperature later is wasteful.
- Regularly check the plug for leaks and replace when necessary. Rubber seals can dry out or crack and become ineffective.
- Bucket some of the used bath water onto the garden, pot plants or lawn. Make sure you check any soaps or detergents used won't harm your lawn or plants.

Tips for hot water systems

- Consider an instantaneous water heater if your water heater is a long distance from the bathroom.
- Insulate hot water pipes to avoid wasting water while waiting for hot water to flow through. This saves energy too.
- Make sure your hot water temperature is not set too high. Adding cold water to reduce the temperature of very hot water is wasteful.

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Tips for taps

A running tap wastes about 6 litres of water a minute. Remembering to turn taps off and fixing any leaks can save valuable water. Here are some quick and easy tips to help save water when using your taps:

- If you have a dripping tap consider getting it fixed. It could waste up to 20,000 litres of water a year.
- Turn the tap off when brushing teeth, wet the brush and use a glass of water for rinsing.
- Don't rinse your razor under a running tap. Fill the basin with a little warm water, it's just as effective and less wasteful.
- Flow controlled aerators for taps are inexpensive and can reduce water flow by 50%.
- Don't turn your taps off too tightly. Over time, this can cause rubber washers to deteriorate.

Tips for toilets

A quarter of the water used in the bathroom is flushed down the toilet. With these simple tips, it is easy to reduce water use in the loo.

- Buy a top-rated, dual-flush toilet. Remember to look for a four or more star water efficiency rating. These toilets use as little as 4.5 litres for a full flush and 3 litres for a half flush, and can save the average home up to 35,000 litres of water per year. Older toilets can use around 18 litres of water per flush.
- Leaking toilet cisterns waste litres of water a day.
- Feminine hygiene products, baby wipes and "flushable" should go in the bin. Flushing these down the toilet not only wastes water but places additional pressure on the sewer system and contributes to blockages.

KITCHEN AND COOKING

About 10% of all water used by a household is for cooking, cleaning, washing dishes or drinking. Some ideas to help reduce water use in the kitchen are:

Tips for the kitchen

- Avoid wasting drinking water by running it from a tap until it cools. Collect it in a bottle or jug and store it in the fridge until it is cool enough to drink.
- Garbage disposal units use about 6 litres of water a day. Put suitable food scraps into a composter or worm farm rather than down the sink. Your garden and the sewer system will thank you.
- When you clean your fish tank, use the existing water in the fish tank to treat garden or potted plants. Tipping the old nitrogen and phosphorous rich water onto your garden will improve the health of your plants.
- When boiling vegetables, use just enough water to cover them and keep the lid on the pan. Vegetables will boil more quickly, saving power and retaining more vitamins. Use the cooled vitamin rich water for pets, garden or potted plants.

Tips for the dishwasher

- The dishwasher is the highest consumer of water in the kitchen. Making sure your dishwasher is a water-efficient model not only saves water, but also energy. Remember to check the water-efficiency rating - the more stars, the more efficient the product.
- Only use the dishwasher when you have a full load. If you only use a small number of dishes, look for a dishwasher with dual draws or smaller capacity.
- Use a rinse-hold setting on the dishwasher if it has one, rather than rinsing dishes under a running tap.

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Tips for the sink

- Don't rinse washed dishes under a running tap. If you have two sinks, fill the second sink with rinsing water. If you have one sink, stack washed dishes in a dish rack and rinse with a pan of hot water.
- Use washing-up liquid sparingly as this reduces the amount of rinsing needed when washing dishes by hand.
- When rinsing dishes, use a plugged sink or pan of water, instead of running the tap continuously.
- Flow-controlled aerators for taps are inexpensive and can reduce water flow by 50%.
- Don't use running water to defrost frozen food. Place food in the fridge to defrost overnight.
- When cleaning, peeling or preparing fruits and vegetables, wash them in a partially-filled sink and then rinse off quickly under the tap, where needed.

LAUNDRY

Approximately 20% of the water used in the home is used in the laundry. In addition to water, washing machines use lots of energy and detergents. Using a washing machine and tapware with a higher water-efficiency rating will save water and money by reducing consumption costs and power usage.

Other things you can do in the laundry are:

Tips for the washing machine

- If you are in the market for a new washing machine, look for one with a four or more star rating.
- Choose water-efficient front loading washing machines.
- Adjust the water level to suit the size of the wash load; many new models will do this automatically.
- Wash with a full load.

LEAKS

Leaks should be identified and repaired as soon as possible. Changing washers usually fixes a dripping tap, but a licensed plumber is generally needed to repair leaking toilets and pipes. A few drips a minute might not seem like much, but they add up!

Check for leaks regularly. If you discover a leak, call a plumber to help you find it and repair it correctly.

Leaking toilets

A toilet that is continuously running can waste up to 60,000 litres of water a year. Follow these simple steps to check if your toilet has a leak:

- Remove the lid of the cistern
- Place a few drops of food dye into the cistern
- Do not flush your toilet for 10 to 15 minutes
- If the dye has seeped into the bowl when you return, you know you have a leaky toilet.

Toilet leaks are often caused by a deteriorated rubber valve in the cistern. A licensed plumber can fix this for you. This check should be done regularly.

Other leaks

Leaks can be obvious, such as a leaking toilet or dripping tap, but some leaks can be concealed or hidden. If you have a larger than normal water usage account or can hear water running when it shouldn't be, testing the water meter is advised.