

City of Beacon
Conservation Advisory Committee

Water Conservation Tips
(Adapted from Eartheasy.com)

Water Conservation in your Home:

1. Check faucets and pipes for leaks

A small drip from a worn faucet washer can waste 20 gallons of water per day. Larger leaks can waste hundreds of gallons.

2. Don't use the toilet as an ashtray or wastebasket

Every time you flush a cigarette butt, facial tissue or other small bit of trash, five to seven gallons of water is wasted.

3. Check your toilets for leaks

Put a little food coloring in your toilet tank. If, without flushing, the color begins to appear in the bowl within 30 minutes, you have a leak that should be repaired immediately. Most replacement parts are inexpensive and easy to install.

4. Use your water meter to check for hidden water leaks

Read the house 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.

5. Install water-saving shower heads and low-flow faucet aerator

- Inexpensive water-saving low-flow shower heads or restrictors are easy for the homeowner to install. Also, long, hot showers can use five to ten gallons every unneeded minute. Limit your showers to the time it takes to soap up, wash down and rinse off. "Low-flow" means it uses less than 2.5 gallons per minute.
- Also, all household faucets should be fit with aerators. This single best home water conservation method is also the cheapest!

6. Put plastic bottles or float booster in your toilet tank

To cut down on water waste, put an inch or two of sand or pebbles inside each of two plastic bottles to weigh them down. Fill the bottles with water, screw the lids on, and put them in your toilet tank, safely away from the operating mechanisms. Or, buy an inexpensive tank ball or float booster. This may save ten or more gallons of water per day.

7. Insulate your water pipes

It's easy and inexpensive to insulate your water pipes with pre-slit foam pipe insulation. You'll get hot water faster plus avoid wasting water while it heats

up.

8. Take shorter showers

One way to cut down on water use is to turn off the shower after soaping up, then turn it back on to rinse. A four-minute shower uses approximately 20 to 40 gallons of water.

9. Turn off the water after you wet your toothbrush

There is no need to keep the water running while brushing your teeth. Just wet your brush and fill a glass for mouth rinsing.

10. Rinse your razor in the sink

Fill the sink with a few inches of warm water. This will rinse your razor just as well as running water, with far less waste of water.

11. Use your dishwasher and clothes washer for only full loads

Automatic dishwashers and clothes washers should be fully loaded for optimum water conservation. Most makers of dishwashing soap recommend not pre-rinsing dishes, which is a big water savings. With clothes washers, avoid the permanent press cycle, which uses an added 20 liters (5 gallons) for the extra rinse. For partial loads, adjust water levels to match the size of the load. Replace old clothes washers. New Energy Star rated washers use 35-50% less water and 50% less energy per load.

12. Keep a bottle of drinking water in the fridge

Running tap water to cool it off for drinking water is wasteful. Store drinking water in the fridge in a safe drinking bottle.

13. When washing dishes by hand, don't leave the water running for rinsing

- If you have a double-basin, fill one with soapy water and one with rinse water. If you have a single-basin sink, gather washed dishes in a dish rack and rinse them with a spray device or a pan of hot water. Dual-swivel aerators are available to make this easier.
- If using a dishwasher, there is usually no need to pre-rinse the dishes.

Water Conservation in the Yard and Garden:

14. Plant drought-resistant lawns, shrubs and plants

- If you are planting a new lawn, or over-seeding an existing lawn, use drought-resistant grasses.
- Many beautiful shrubs and plants thrive with far less watering than other species. Replace herbaceous perennial borders with native plants.
- Native plants will use less water and be more resistant to local plant diseases.
- Plant slopes with plants that will retain water and help reduce runoff.

- Group plants according to their watering needs.

15. Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants

Mulch will slow evaporation of moisture while discouraging weed growth. Adding 2 - 4 inches of organic material such as compost or bark mulch will increase the ability of the soil to retain moisture.

16. Water your lawn only when it needs it

A good way to see if your lawn needs watering is to step on the grass. If it springs back up when you move, it doesn't need water. If it stays flat, the lawn is ready for watering. Letting the grass grow taller (to 3") will also promote water retention in the soil.

17. Water during the early parts of the day

Early morning is generally better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus. Early watering, and late watering, also reduces water loss to evaporation. Watering early in the day is also the best defense against slugs and other garden pests.

18. Use a broom, not a hose, to clean driveways and sidewalks

19. Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, faucets and couplings

Leaks outside the house may not seem as bad since they're not as visible. But they can be just as wasteful as leaks indoors. Check frequently to keep them drip-free. Use hose washers at spigots and hose connections to eliminate leaks.