

USING WATER EFFICIENTLY IN THE HOME

Most people use 70 to 90 gallons of water per day indoors. While it may be difficult to imagine how all that water is used, a quick look often shows that much is wasted due to leaks or careless habits.

From the kitchen, to the bathroom, to the laundry room, changing your habits can save money on your water and electric bills and help conserve vital resources. Water consumption can be easily reduced at little or no cost.

Water conservation is not just for droughts. Water conservation is part of a balanced approach to managing our water system to help meet the needs of our customers and the needs of the environment. Water conservation today saves you money on your future bills.

The largest water use in most homes is toilet flushing. Showers and baths account for the second largest volume of water and household laundry is third.

A leaking toilet wastes an average of 750 gallons of water per month. A slowly dripping faucet can use 15 to 20 gallons of water per day while a larger leak can waste hundreds of gallons in 24 hours.

Detecting Leaks

You can check your entire plumbing system for leaks in three easy steps:

1. Make sure no water is being used inside or outside the house.
2. Locate your water meter. Residential meters (manufactured by Sensus) have a pointer on the circular face which indicates water consumption in gallons. The odometer-style numbers at the bottom of the meter show the total number of gallons used. The white triangle in the center of the meter spins with very small water flows.
3. Watch the white triangle in the center of the meter to see if it moves. If the triangle does not stop spinning, you have a leak in your plumbing.



HOW MUCH CAN YOU SAVE?

The typical family of four, by developing a inexpensive, minimal water conservation plan would see a remarkable daily savings. The plan would include: installing a water saving shower-head; installing displacement devices in their toilet tanks; installing water saving faucet aerators; and turning off the water while brushing their teeth.

| Conservation Practice | GALLONS SAVED IN 1 DAY BY A FAMILY OF 4 | |
|--|---|-------|
| | Total Water | |
| | Before | After |
| SHOWERS (4 showers, 25 minute total) | 125 | 55 |
| TOILET (20 flushes) | 110 | 80 |
| FAUCETS (Shaving, hand washing, etc.) | 26 | 16 |
| TOOTH BRUSHING (8 times) | 16 | 2 |
| TOTAL GALLONS (used in one day) | 277 | 153 |

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Port Townsend Water Quality
250 Madison Street
Port Townsend, WA 98368
(360) 379-5001



BROCHURES IN THIS SERIES

- #1 A Customer's Guide to Efficient Use of Water in the Home
- #2 A Customer's Guide to Efficient Use of Water Outdoors
- #3 A Customer's Guide to Efficient Use of Water in Landscaping and Gardening
- #4 A Customer's Guide to Efficient Use of Water with Plumbing Fixtures and Repairs

Making the most of a limited resource

a customer's
guide to
efficient use
of water. . .
In the Home



Port Townsend Public Works

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS WATER CONSERVATION

Plugging the Leaks:

- Fix any leaks. One drop a second equals seven gallons of water wasted per day.

TOILETS

- Fix toilet leaks. Toilets usually leak at the overflow pipe or around the plunger seal. You may not be able to see a toilet leak but you usually can hear it—it sounds like running water.
- Every flush uses 5 to 7 gallons of water. Toilets should not be used as a trash can to flush away tissues, gum wrappers, cigarette butts, etc.



- Most toilets can work well with less water. Use a toilet "dam" or displacement device such as a jar or bag of water to reduce the amount of water used for each flush. Do not use a brick as a displacement device because they may disintegrate and cause plumbing problems.
- Consider replacing older model 3.5 to 7 gallon-per-flush toilets with a new 1.6 gallon-per-flush high efficiency model.

SHOWERS

- Shower or bath? It depends on how long you stand in the shower and how full you fill the tub. A shower will put out about 5 gallons a minute. A tub will hold about 30 gallons of water. A partially filled tub uses far less water than a long shower. . . and a short shower uses less water than a full tub.
- Shower-takers can save by turning down the valve on the shower so the water isn't running at full blast.
- Install a low flow showerhead, which uses only 2 to 2.5 gallons per minute.
- When filling the tub, don't let water run down the drain until it gets hot. Adjust the temperature after the water is hot.



BATHROOM SINKS

- Leave the water off when brushing teeth or shaving. Turn it on again to rinse.
- When shaving or washing hands or face, put a stopper into the sink to collect water used for dunking the razor or washcloth. A faucet left wide open can put 3 gallons a minute down the drain.
- Install a 1.5 gallon per minute aerator in faucets and cut water use in half; don't use faucets at full pressure.

LAUNDRY ROOM

- Many washing machines use 40 or more gallons of water per load. If your washer has adjustable water level settings, use the water level setting appropriate for the size of your load or run the washer only if you have a full load.



- For hand washing, put a stopper in the wash tub for both wash and rinse. Don't let the water run continually.
- If you are replacing a washing machine, look for front-loading models. They use at least 13 gallons less per load than standard top-loading models.

KITCHEN

- Automatic dishwashers use about 15 gallons of water per run. Make sure the dishwasher is full before you turn it on. For most dishwashers, you do not need to rinse the dishes first; just scrape them clean.
- If you wash dishes by hand, do not leave the water running. Fill one sink or dishpan for wash water and another for rinse water.
- When preparing vegetables, and other foods, put a stopper in the sink or use a pan of water instead of letting the faucet run.
- When waiting for hot water from the faucet, save the cool water for watering plants.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of letting the water run to get a cold drink.



- Compost vegetable peels for the garden instead of using the garbage disposal.
- Install a 2.5 gallon-per-minute or less aerator on the kitchen faucet.