

## Conserving Water... and Wastewater!!!

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It is that time of the year when water/wastewater conservation is on everyone's mind (even though this year probably not as much). Conserving is simple, yet we seem to think about it when the temperature exceeds 70 degrees. The reality is that water, especially in the west, is a scarce commodity; and the conservation of this most precious resource needs to be practiced all year round. Conserving is so simple and dramatically helps the environment as well as our checkbook. Remembering to conserve water throughout your everyday life will eventually become an engrained habit that you won't even have to think about. Here are some simple tips that will help you save water.

1. When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Instead, fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.
2. Some refrigerator, air conditioners, and icemakers are cooled with wasted flows of water. Consider upgrading with air-cooled appliances for significant water savings.
3. When buying new appliances, consider those that offer cycle and load size adjustments. They are more water and energy efficient.
4. Designate one glass for your drinking water each day or refill a water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses to be washed.
5. For cold drinks, keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap. Every drop will go down you and not the drain.
6. By shortening your shower time by a minute or two, you will save up to 150 gallons per month.
7. If your shower fills a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, replace the showerhead with a water-efficient model.
8. Run the clothes washer and dishwasher only when full. By doing this, you can save up to 1000 gallons per month.
9. Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator for water efficiency and food safety.
10. Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Compost vegetable waste instead and save gallons every time. You will also reduce the chance of plugging your sewer line, as disposal of wastes tend to accumulate in the sags of your sewer line.
11. Monitor your water bill for unusually high use. Your bill and water meters are tools that can help you discover leaks.
12. Wash you fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water over them.
13. Spreading a layer of organic mulch around plants retains moisture and saves water, time and money.
14. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway and sidewalks and save water every time.
15. Water your lawn and garden in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler to minimize evaporation.

16. If water runs off your lawn easily, split your watering time into shorter periods to allow better absorption.
17. Aerate your lawn at least once a year so water can reach the roots rather than run off the surface.
18. We are likely to notice indoor leaks so don't forget to check outdoor faucets, sprinklers, and hoses for leaks.
19. Check the root zone of your lawn or garden for moisture before watering by using a trowel or spade. If it is still moist 2 inches under soil surface, you still have enough water.
20. Rather than following a set-watering schedule, check for soil moisture 2 to 3 inches below surface before watering.
21. Adjust sprinklers so that only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk or streets.
22. Choose shrubs and groundcovers instead of turf for hard-to-water areas such as steep slopes and isolated strips.
23. Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. A taller lawn shades roots and holds moisture better than if is closely clipped.
24. Use sprinklers for large areas of grass. Water small patches by hand to avoid waste.
25. Walkways and patios provide space that doesn't need watering. These useful "rooms" add value to your property.
26. Use drip irrigation for shrubs and trees to apply water directly to the roots where it is needed.
27. When planting a lawn, choose grass seeds that are native to the region in which you live.
28. Reduce the amount of lawn in your yard by planting shrubs and ground cover appropriate to your site and region.
29. Teach your children to turn off faucets tightly after each use.
30. Remember to check your sprinkler system valves periodically for leaks and keep the sprinkler heads in good shape.
31. Soak pots and pans instead of letting water run while you scrape them clean.
32. Don't water your lawn on windy days when most of the water blows away or evaporates.
33. Water plants deeply but less frequently to encourage deep root growth and drought tolerance.
34. Know where your master water shut-off valve is located. This could save water and prevent water damage to your home.
35. Group plants with the same watering needs together to avoid over-watering some while under watering others.
36. Turn off water while brushing teeth and save 25 gallons of water per month.
37. If the toilet flapper doesn't close after flushing or seal properly replace it.
38. When the kids want to cool off, use a sprinkler in an area where your lawn needs it most.
39. Insulate hot water pipes for more immediate hot water at the faucets for energy savings.

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

Everywhere you go people are talking about energy conservation for a cleaner environment. What they should be saying is conserve water because it is the root to a much cleaner environment. By conserving water, we will save in electrical costs at the water and wastewater treatment as well as pumping stations.

Hopefully this will help our readers and their customer to have good habits about conserving water in their homes

Sources: *Wyoming Connection, Issue Spring 2009, pages 19-21*