



Outdoor Water Conservation Checklist

FREE AND EASY IDEAS

- Water your lawn only when needed, 2-3 days a week at most. If you step on your lawn and the grass springs back, it does not need to be watered.
- Water early in the morning when temperatures and winds are at their lowest levels to reduce evaporation.
- Turn off your sprinklers when it rains. Rain sensors and shutoff switches are inexpensive and can be retrofitted to almost any system.
- See the indoor water conservation checklist for ways to capture otherwise wasted water to use for watering potted plants.
- Don't water the gutter. Runoff is wasteful and can carry pollutants to creeks.
- Check your irrigation monthly for:
 - ✓ Spray heads blocked by plant growth or clogged with debris
 - ✓ Poorly aimed nozzles/misaligned and tilted heads/incorrect arc (adjust at head)
 - ✓ Mixed heads (each station should only have one kind of head)
 - ✓ Overspray (adjust flow through the valve, use different nozzles, or adjust the flow control screw on the nozzle itself)
 - ✓ Broken heads (water leaks from the seal around the pop-up stem), broken parts (some expense)
 - ✓ Heads that weep even when off (due to a faulty valve or the lack of check valves)
 - ✓ Sunken heads in a lawn (may need taller risers or turf may need dethatching – some expense)
- Reset your irrigation timers four times a year as the seasons change. Most homeowners overwater each fall by 25% or more because they don't readjust at the end of September when solar radiation is already halfway to winter lows.
- Use a trigger nozzle on hoses so water won't run except when you intend it to.
- Teach children that hoses and sprinklers are not toys. Restrict or eliminate use of hose-end water toys.
- Use a broom to clean driveways and other hardscape.
- Schedule each individual zone in your irrigation system to account for the type of plant, sprinkler, sun exposure and soil type for the specific area. The same watering schedule rarely applies to all zones in the system.
- Remove dying plants and weeds that compete for available water.
- Maintain sharp blades on pruning shears and lawn mowers to reduce plant water loss.
- Aerate lawns and apply compost periodically to decrease compaction and improve penetration of water, air and nutrients into root zones. Lawns need aeration when water pools or runs off after only a few minutes of watering.
- Avoid installing water features. Even recycled water evaporates.



INEXPENSIVE OR MODERATE EFFORT REQUIRED

- Mulch flower and garden areas, as well as tree and shrub bases.
- Avoid planting turf or installing spray irrigation in areas that are difficult to water without runoff, such as isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways and on slopes.
- At least once a year, confirm that all irrigation systems are distributing water uniformly and inspect, repair, and/or adjust subsurface or drip watering systems.
- Immediately shut off irrigation system(s) and adjust whenever irrigation water falls or runs onto hard surfaces such as sidewalks, streets or driveways.
- Repair all leaks as soon as detected, including hose couplings.
- Plant drought-tolerant or low-water plants for landscaping.
- Cover pools, spas and other water features when not in use to minimize evaporation. A good pool cover will save energy by up to 90% and water by up to 70%, saving nearly 1,000 gallons of water per month.
- Seasonally check pools and spas for leaks, which can lose up to 1,000 gallons a day. Symptoms of leaks include water level drops over 2 inches per week in the summer (with automatic filling off) or increased need for chemicals.
- The more frequently swimming pool filters are cleaned, the less often you'll need to replace the pool water.

GOOD WATER SAVING INVESTMENTS

- Install a weather-based irrigation controller and efficient nozzles. Your local water agency may offer rebates.
- Reduce the amount of lawn you have, especially where it isn't used for play.
- Plant drought-tolerant and native plants.
- Employ a certified landscape-irrigation auditor to conduct a thorough and comprehensive check for efficiency of water application. He or she can inspect and tune your system to ensure optimal efficiency.
- Replace lawns with artificial turf.
- Determine specific water requirements for all existing landscape plants, and water accordingly. Plants with the same water needs should be planted and irrigated together so you don't have to overwater some to give the rest enough.
- Water all plants deeply but infrequently to encourage deeper, healthier rooting.
- Install drip irrigation for trees, shrubs, slopes and narrow spaces.
- Replace pool filters with newer water conserving models. A single back-flush with older models uses 180-250 gallons of water.
- Harvest water from rainfall for landscape irrigation purposes. Systems can range from rain barrels to underground cisterns.





Indoor Water Conservation Checklist

FREE AND EASY IDEAS

Kitchens

- Don't leave the faucet running while you rinse or wash dishes.
- Scrape food from dishes first, then rinse only as much as needed. Rinsing in a second sink or tub uses less water than rinsing under a faucet.
- Limit use of the garbage disposal. Save food scraps to run the garbage disposal only once, or save more water by composting.
- Operate the dishwasher only when it is fully loaded. Each dishwasher cycle uses 9-25 gallons of water, depending on the model.
- Capture and use otherwise wasted water (waiting for water to warm or cool, vegetable or dish water). Soapy water is generally OK for watering plants as long as there is no bleach or borax.
- Keep a water bottle in the refrigerator for drinking instead of running tap water until cold.

Bathrooms

- Toilets use 27% of average indoor household water. Don't use toilets as waste baskets or ash trays.
- Showers use 17% of indoor water. Take shorter showers, five minutes or less. Turn shower water off except to wet before soaping, then again for rinsing.
- Cut down on bathtub use or fill the tub to a lower level.
- Capture the initial cold water in a bucket to water potted plants. Turn it all the way to hot until you get the temperature you want to decrease the wait.
- Faucets use 16% of indoor water. Only run water when actually using it.
- Turning off the tap while brushing your teeth or shaving can save more than 200 gallons of water each month.
- Rinse your razor in a partially filled sink instead of running the water.
- Teach children to turn water faucets off quickly and tightly after each use.



Laundry

- Clothes washers consume 22% of indoor water. Wash only full loads of laundry. Each washing cycle uses 20 – 40 gallons of water, depending on the model of the machine.
- Teach children to change into play clothes after school so that school clothes can be worn more than once before washing.



- Leaks consume 14% of average indoor water use. Check for and repair toilet leaks, which can waste as much as 200 gallons a day.
 - ✓ Put food coloring in the tank and wait. If color shows in the bowl you have a leak.
 - ✓ Adjust or replace the flapper. If you hear the toilet running but color didn't appear in the bowl, adjust the float arm to below the overflow line.
 - ✓ If it still leaks, call a plumber.
- Check and repair faucet and pipe leaks. You can check your entire system by turning everything off and seeing if the water meter still shows flow.
- Install low-flow shower heads and faucet flow restrictors (aerators). You can purchase quality, low-flow fixtures for around \$10 to \$20 each and achieve water savings of 25%–60%.
- Replace older toilets with 1.28 gallons-per-flush high efficiency toilets.
- Install a circulating hot water system with a timer.
- Replace traditional clothes washers with new, energy- and water-conserving machines that use less than 27 gallons of water per load.
- Insulate hot water pipes. Running the “hot” line to clear cool water is wasteful.

