



The Water Drop

As you know, water conservation is a hot topic throughout the nation. Because water is a limited natural resource, it is important that we use what we have in careful moderation. By using water responsibly this summer and all year, you can help preserve our water supply and keep your water bill to a minimum.

Water Conservation

Stop Leaks

TOP 3 APPROACHES TO SAVING WATER

Many homes have hidden water leaks, so it is very important to make sure your home is leak free. The easiest way to do this is to locate your water meter and read it. Wait two hours without using any water, and then reread the meter. If the read it now shows is not identical to the one you originally took, there is a leak in your home. To find it, please perform a water audit as follows:

Outside the home...

Leaks at outside spigots and in irrigation systems can easily go unnoticed because of their location. It is important to check your irrigation system and all outside frequently to ensure they are functioning properly. On average, 50-70% of a home's water use is outside, so a leak can easily add up to thousands of gallons of water wasted.

- Look for leaks at the spigots.
- Ensure that all sprinkler systems are working properly.
- Look for standing water around the lines which might indicate a break.

In the bathroom...

- Check each toilet in your house.
 1. Look around the back of the toilet for leaks on the supply line.
 2. Put a few drops of food coloring in the tank and wait at least 15 minutes to see if the color appears in the bowl. If colored water is in the bowl, there is a leak. Flush the toilet immediately afterwards to prevent staining.
- Check supply lines under the sink for leaks.
 1. Look at each line for weak spots such as bulges in the hose.
 2. Watch the faucet for a minute to see if it drips.
 3. Turn on the faucets to check for leaks while they are in operation.
- Check the bathtub/showerhead for visual leaks.
 1. Operate the faucet to make sure it functions properly.
 2. With a tub, divert water to the showerhead to check for leaks there, too. When the water is diverted to the showerhead, the water flow should stop from the tub faucet.

In the kitchen and laundry room...

Check all water sources for leaks and weak or broken supply lines, including:

- Sinks and/or faucets
- Dishwasher
- Garbage disposal
- Ice maker
- Washing machine

Fix the Problem!

After you isolate a leak, it is important that you fix it as soon as possible. Here are some easy solutions to the most common problems:

- Dripping faucets can easily be fixed by replacing the washer. If your faucet is dripping at a rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste 2,700 gallons per year.
- Running toilets typically indicate a problem with the flapper valve or a stuck handle. Both can be found at any hardware store, are inexpensive, and can be easily installed.
- Supply lines with leaks or weak spots should be replaced as soon as possible. Not only are they wasting water, but they could potentially cause damage to your home if they break completely. Contact the appropriate dealer or retail store for that appliance.

GENERAL WATER SAVING TIPS

- Report all significant water losses (broken pipes, open hydrants, errant sprinklers, etc.) to the property owner or Mount Werner Water.
- Support efforts and programs that create a concern for water conservation among tourists and visitors to our community.
- Encourage your friends and neighbors to be part of a water-conscious community. Promote water conservation by word-of-mouth and by example. Encourage your friends, neighbors, and co-workers to "do their part".
- Conserve water because it is the right thing to do. Don't waste it just because someone else is footing the bill, such as when you are a guest at a hotel.

WATER USAGE STATISTICS

- Bathroom facilities claim nearly 75% of the total water used indoors.
- On average, 50 to 70% of a home's water consumption is used outdoors.
- If all U.S. households installed water-saving devices, water use would decrease by 30%, saving an estimated 5.4 billion gallons per day. This would result in a savings of \$11.3 million per day or more than \$4 billion per year.

Install Water-Saving Devices

Older models of most fixtures and appliances, such as toilets, washing machines, and dishwashers use a lot more water than the newer ones, which are specifically designed to be more efficient. If possible, replace your old fixtures and appliances.

Toilets

- Toilets are the largest water user in a home. New, low-volume toilets use less than half the water of older models. If you are unable to replace your old toilet, install a toilet dam or displacement device such as a plastic bag or bottle. This will cut down on the amount of water needed for each flush. Be sure it does not interfere with the operating parts.

Washing machine

- The clothes washer is usually the second largest water user in a home. Energy Star™ rated washers that also have a Water Factor at or lower than 9.5 use 35-50% less water and 50% less energy per load than the typical washer. This not only saves you money on your water bill, but your energy bill as well.

Showerheads & faucets

- As with most appliances, older fixtures are also less water efficient than the newer ones. Showerheads should be replaced with an ultra-low-flow version and faucets should be retrofitted by installing aerators with flow restrictors. Both will slow the flow of water.

VISIT A LOCAL XERISCAPE GARDEN

To learn more about Xeriscape gardening and landscaping, please visit The Botanical Gardens and our demonstration garden on the berm at Fetcher Park.

Use Water Responsibly

The easiest way to save water is to use it responsibly. This should be done indoors and outdoors everyday. Basically, if you're not using it, turn it off. Every drop counts! You can make a difference!

Inside the home...

- In the shower, turn the water off while lathering up and back on to rinse.
- Don't let water run while shaving, washing your face, or brushing your teeth.
- Operate your dishwasher and clothes washer only when they are fully loaded. If you have a smaller load, set the water level at the minimum setting.
- Store drinking water in the refrigerator, so you don't have to let it run to get cold.
- Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects, and other similar waste in the trash rather than the toilet.
- Never pour water down the drain when there is another use for it, such as watering a plant, cleaning, or giving to a pet.
- Defrost frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave instead of running water over it.
- When washing dishes by hand, use two basins - one for washing and one for rinsing - rather than let the water run.

Outside the home...

- Water plants only when they need it, not on a fixed schedule and always water during the coolest time of the day to minimize evaporation. Early mornings and late evenings are best.
- Allow water to soak in slowly. Don't try for a quick drowning, as the water will likely just evaporate.
- Install a rain shut-off device which will override your sprinkler system settings when it is raining.
- Adjust sprinklers so only the lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk, or street.
- Cover your hot tub or swimming pool to reduce water evaporation.
- When washing your car, use a bucket of soapy water and save the hose for rinsing.
- Don't clean your driveway with the hose when a broom can do the same job.
- When mowing, raise the blade on your lawn mower to at least three inches high, or to its highest level. Closely-cut grass makes the roots work harder, requiring more water.
- For landscaping, use the principles of Xeriscape. This method uses native and drought-tolerant plants, mulch to hold in moisture, and grouping plants according to their water and light needs.

XERISCAPE™

The Xeriscape method of landscaping is an increasing trend in water conscious communities. It promotes water conservation and virtually hassle-free lawn care through the use of seven basic principles: planning & design, soil improvement, efficient irrigation, appropriate zoning of plants, using mulches, employing turf alternatives, and doing appropriate maintenance. And despite what some may think, Xeriscape does not consist of ugly, colorless plants, rocks, and cacti. Xeriscape, properly designed and maintained, is colorful, lush, and easy to care for.

PLANNING & DESIGN

- Make a 'blueprint' of how you want your landscape, focusing on plant locations in regards to sun exposure and water needs.

SOIL IMPROVEMENTS

- Pre-treat your soil as needed with the addition of organic matter to help promote water percolation and retention.

EFFICIENT IRRIGATION

- Zone turf areas in respect to their water needs and use the appropriate irrigation method that waters the specific area of plants most efficiently.

ZONING OF PLANTS

- Group plants with similar light and water requirements together and place them in an appropriate part of the yard which matches these requirements.

MULCHES

- Use mulches around your plants to help keep the roots cool, minimize water evaporation, and reduce weed growth.

TURF ALTERNATIVES

- Avoid the typical bluegrass turf for your basic landscaping needs. Instead, use a lower water-using turf such as buffalo grass, blue grama grass, or fescue.

APPROPRIATE MAINTENANCE

- Maintain your landscape on a regular basis. Irrigate properly, prune, fertilize, and keep pests under control.

To learn more about water conservation and Xeriscape, please visit the following websites:

www.h2ouse.org
 www.awwa.org
 www.denverwater.org
 www.waterwiser.org
 www.ext.colostate.edu/menugard.html

