



# Water Conservation Tips

Sources: Residential  
End Uses of Water,  
AWWA Research  
Foundation

Fresh water is precious, and periodic dry spells like the one experienced last fall can stress our local water supplies. The average household uses about 280 gallons of water each day. Here are some tips of what you can do to conserve fresh water and lower your water and sewerage bills:

## 1. STOP LEAKS (13.7%)

- Repair leaking faucets- even the smallest drip can waste 20 gallons a day, a leaking toilet can waste 200 gallons a day
- You can check your water meter before and after work or retiring to confirm no leaks, or use a leak detector tablet in the toilet tank.

## 2. TOILET (26.7%)

- Refrain from using your toilet as a trash can for tissues, etc. Each flush can waste up to five gallons of water.
- If you don't have a low flow toilet, place a brick in your toilet tank.

## 3. FAUCET (15.7%)

- Add your food waste to the trash can instead of using the disposal. Disposals use a great deal of water and add unnecessary solids as well as nutrients to the sewer system or septic systems. These nutrients are expensive and difficult for our waste water treatment plants to remove and are detrimental to receiving streams. Better yet, start composting!

- Use a dishpan for washing dishes and cleaning vegetables.
- Keep a bottle of cold water in the refrigerator.
- Insulate hot water pipes to reduce the amount of water which must be run .
- Turn off the water when brushing your teeth or shaving.

## 4. CLOTHES WASHER (21.7%)

- Use only full loads for your washing machine or dishwasher.

## 5. SHOWER (16.8%)

- Install low flow aerators and shower heads.

## 6. OTHER (6.4%)

- Water less frequently and more deeply, and only in the morning. Consider soaker hoses.
- Use a broom rather than a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks.
- Wash cars with a pail of soapy water and a hose with a trigger nozzle. Better yet, take your car to the car wash; they recycle the water.
- Winterize outdoor spigots. Mark the master water shut off valve in case of burst pipes.
- Cover an outdoor pool when not in use. Spread dechlorinated pool water on grassy areas, never to streets or storm sewers.

Sources: Chester County Water Resources Authority, Aqua America, AWWA Research Foundation.  
Compiled by Chester Ridley Crum Watersheds Association, June 2008.



# Some Water Smart Ideas

from **AQUA**<sup>SM</sup>

Many people overestimate the amount of water required for lush gardens and lawns. Water-efficient practices produce healthy lawns and landscaping and reduce runoff and waste.

## Watering Smart

- ~ Scheduled watering wastes water. Water when 50 percent of your lawn shows signs of wilt, or walk on your lawn and see if you leave footprints. If you do, it's time to water.
- ~ Water in the early morning or in the evening when the sun is low, winds are calm and temperatures are cool. This reduces evaporation. You can lose as much as 30 percent to evaporation by watering midday.
- ~ Change your irrigation system practices with the seasons.
- ~ Water in zones. Adjust each watering zone to account for shade exposure and soil type of each area of your landscape.
- ~ Remember: less is more. Saturate roots and let soil dry. Watering too much, too often results in shallow roots, weed growth, disease and fungus.
- ~ Check your system/hose monthly for leaks and broken or clogged sprinkler heads.
- ~ Be sure your irrigation system is watering your lawn and gardens, not the sidewalk, driveway or street.
- ~ If you use an irrigation system, install "smart" controllers on your irrigation system to evaluate weather and soil moisture conditions. This guarantees that your system waters only when necessary.
- ~ Install rain shutoff sensors. These sensors turn your irrigation system off in rainy weather.

## Planting Smart

- ~ Evaluate your soil. Have your soil tested for nutrient content and organic matter. This will help you determine if your soil supports the plants you've selected and retain water.
- ~ Use plants native to your area. They require less care and water.
- ~ Group plants according to their water needs.
- ~ Limit turf areas to those needed for practical uses. Lawns require a large amount of supplemental water and greater maintenance than other vegetation.
- ~ When selecting plants, avoid those labeled hard to establish, susceptible to disease, or needs frequent attention. These often require large amounts of supplemental water.
- ~ Maintenance is key:
  - ~ Use mulch to reduce evaporation from the soil surface and cut down on weed growth.
  - ~ Remove dead turf or plant stalks and aerate turf so water moves to the root zone.
  - ~ Raise your lawn mower cutting height, longer grass blades help shade each other, cut down on evaporation and inhibit weed growth.
  - ~ Do not install ornamental water features unless they recycle water.