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Indoor Water Conservation

Daily Water Use

Most water usage occurs inside the home as we go through our daily routines. The largest amount of water is used in the bathroom.

- Toilets alone account for over 25 percent of a household's water usage. Leaky toilets continually lose large amounts of water. Visit www.utilities.columbus.gov/Water/PDFs/09ToiletFaucetLeaks.pdf to learn what you can do to ensure your toilet is working properly.
- Older toilets can use 3.5 to 7 gallons of water per flush. Insert a water displacement bag* in the tank or use a filled, half-gallon jug to displace some of the water. Or purchase a newer model; many use up to 60 percent less water.
- Small faucet leaks can add up to a large waste of water. Replace washers, valves or faucet as needed to save money in the long run.

- Install low flow shower heads and faucet aerators for a 50 percent reduction of your household water consumption.
- Reduce time spent in the shower. While waiting for hot water to reach the faucet, collect it in a bucket to water plants or flush the toilet.

There are many opportunities to save water throughout the rest of the house:

- Newer model washing machines use less water and energy. Older machines can use up to 50 gallons per load while newer models use around 25 gallons per load.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running water until it is cold.
- Fill the sink and close the tap while washing dishes. Clean vegetables in a bowl of water.

*Call 311 (or 645-3111) to request a free Water Saving Kit which includes a displacement bag, flow reducers and other helpful items.

COMPARISON CHART FOR WATER USAGE AND SAVINGS					
Normal Usage			Conservation Usage		
	Gals Used	Method	Gals Used	Method	Savings
Shower (10 mins)	50	Shower head running continuously	25	Shorter showers (5 mins) OR	50%
			25	Low flow shower head (10 min) OR	50%
			12.5	Low flow shower head (5 min)	75%
Tub Bath	36	Standard tub, full	18	Standard tub, half full	50%
Toilet Flushing	5-7	Depends on tank size	4-6	Use a displacement bag, or milk jug in tank reservoir (OR)	20%
			1.6	Replace with low flow toilet	73%
Washing Hands	5	With tap running continuously	1	Fill a standard basin	80%
Brushing Teeth	10	With tap running continuously	1	Wet brush with brief rinses	90%
Shaving	20	With tap running continuously	1	Fill a standard basin	95%
Washing Dishes	30	With tap running continuously	10	Wash and rinse with a half filled standard sink.	66%
Dishwasher	16	Full cycle	7	Short cycle	56%
Washing Machine	60	Full cycle; Highest water level	27	Short cycle	55%
Outdoor Watering	10	Per minute; Average garden hose	varies	Eliminate, night watering, etc.	varies

Less than 1% of the world's fresh water supplies are available for human consumption.



Outdoor Water Conservation

By implementing a few new gardening practices, you can improve the health and appearance of your yard, saving time and money while doing something good for the environment. Conserve both water and money by giving your lawn and garden only what it needs. Consider these tips to make use of every drop:

Reduce Water Consumption



- Compost improves soil quality and helps it hold water.
- A thick layer of mulch or ComTil* around plants and shrubs helps retain soil moisture.
- Native plants have adapted to our soil and climate conditions; once established, they can thrive on rainfall alone.

- Use a soaker hose in the garden for deep, infrequent watering.
- Easy does it – 1" per week is enough to keep lawns healthy. Call 311 or 645-3111 for a free rain gauge.
- Water in the early morning to reduce evaporation.
- Choose the right plant for the site – consider amount of sunlight, soil type and pH your plants require.



Reuse Rain Water

- Place a rain barrel under a downspout to collect rain water for future use.
- Plant a rain garden to help eliminate areas in your yard that collect rain. For more information visit www.franklinswcd.org.

More Water Conservation Ideas

For more ideas on ways to conserve water in your home and garden visit our website, www.utilities.columbus.gov.

Recycle Yard Waste

Use compost from yard waste and kitchen scraps to feed your lawn and garden. It's easy; use these ideas to get started:

- Select a location. While many gardeners choose to buy or make a compost bin, a hidden, three-foot by three-foot area will do.
- Collect yard waste and kitchen scraps. Layer kitchen scraps between several thick layers of yard waste.
- Good yard waste material includes leaves, twigs, grass and other plant clippings.
- Use kitchen scraps such as coffee grinds, egg shells and vegetable peelings. Do not use meat or fatty foods.
- Keep the pile aerated and moist. If it dries out, add just enough water to moisten.
- Turn the pile with a large gardening fork to ensure an even decomposition and minimize odor.
- It will be ready to use in four to six months. The finished product will be dark, moist and finely textured.
- Use a light layer of compost in place of chemical fertilizer on your lawn. Work it into the soil around existing plants or use it to prepare your garden for new plantings.
- For more information see The Ohio State University Extension Services fact sheet on composting at <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1189.html>.



*Com-Til is a dark, rich compost used to mulch, condition soil or to break up tough clay soil. Produced by the Columbus Compost Facility using an all natural process, Com-Til is available for purchase. Call 645-3153 or visit online www.utilities.columbus.gov.