



An OCC Guide to Water Conservation

Used for drinking, cooking, washing, cleaning, watering and personal hygiene, treated water is our most precious resource. That is why conserving it makes sense. Using less water will save you money and guarantee a supply for the future. The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel provides these tips to help you watch your water usage.

Conserving water indoors

According to an American Waterworks Association report, a typical single family home uses approximately 69.3 gallons of water inside the home daily. Of all the water fixtures in the home, commodes use the most water representing 18.5 gallons of a family's total daily water use. Washing machines represent about 15 gallons followed by showers at 11.6 gallons, faucets at 10.9 gallons, leaks at 9.5 gallons, running a bath at 1.2 gallons and dish-washers at one gallon.

Commode

- One way to reduce the amount of water flushed is to fill a plastic laundry bottle with water and an inch of sand and place it in the commode's tank. The weight of the bottle displaces the tank water, requiring less water per flush. *Be careful to avoid jamming the flushing mechanism with the bottle.* Also, you may need to adjust the amount of water within the bottle. If it is too heavy, the commode won't flush.
- Avoid using your commode as a trash can. Why waste up to seven gallons of precious water to flush down a tiny piece of trash?

- Locate and fix leaks. An easy way to test a commode for leaks, is to place 10 drops of food coloring into the tank. Wait 15 minutes and then check the bowl. If the colored water shows up, you have a leak. A leaking toilet can waste as much as 200 gallons each day.

Shower & Bath

- Replace your showerhead with a low-flow version that uses no more than 2.5 gallons of water per minute.
- To find out whether you would use more water showering or taking a bath, plug the drain while you shower. Compare the final water level to your normal bath water level. Typically, a partially-filled tub is equal to a short shower.
- Taking a shorter shower can help conserve water.

Sink and Other Household Fixtures

- Turning off the water while you brush your teeth or wash your face will save one gallon of water per minute. Fill a glass to rinse your mouth or fill the basin to wash off your face.
- When shaving, plug up the sink and run enough water to rinse your razor instead of using running water.



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- Make sure all of your faucets have an aerated or spray tap. Aerators mix air with the water to cut down on water flow.
- Make it a habit to fix faucet leaks promptly. Leaky faucets often require new washers. A leaky faucet can waste about six gallons of water a day.
- When doing smaller loads of laundry, adjust the water level on the washing machine accordingly.
- Avoid using the dishwasher for partial loads of dishes.

Conserving water outdoors

- The average single family home uses 50 to 70 percent of their outdoor water usage on lawn and garden maintenance.
- Water your lawn during the cooler morning hours to avoid rapid evaporation.
- Promptly repair any leaky hoses or spigots.
- Position sprinklers so that they hit the plants, not the sidewalk.
- When purchasing new trees and plants, look for those which require less water to survive.

- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean the driveway and sidewalk.
- Turn the hose off while washing your car.
- Adjust your watering schedule according to the weather. Let Mother Nature water your lawn for you.

Why you should conserve water

- Only 1 percent of the Earth's water supply is available for drinking.
- You can survive for a month without food. You can only live for *five to seven days* without water.
- According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the United States uses about *408 billion gallons* of water per day.

To make certain that the steps you are taking to conserve water are working, the U.S. EPA has developed the WaterSense program that strives to use water more efficiently. As part of the program, labeling specifications were created that will ensure the toilets and faucets you purchase are high-performing, water-efficient models. For more information on this program visit the EPA website at www.epa.gov/watersense.

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, represents the interests of 4.5 million households in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts. The state agency also educates consumers about electric, natural gas, telephone and water issues and resolves complaints from individuals. To receive utility information, brochures, schedule a presentation or file a utility complaint, residential consumers may call 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) toll free in Ohio or visit the OCC website at www.pickocc.org.

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.

For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:

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