



Water Conservation Checklist

Cocoa Utilities Department's Conservation Checklist for Homeowners

When it comes to conserving water at home, it is difficult to know where to start. There are so many ways to reduce water use, but every home faces different opportunities and challenges. Wouldn't it be useful for you to have a complete checklist of all the ways to conserve water at home? This checklist contains simple things that you can do to conserve more water.

There is no exact order to follow with this checklist. Go through the list and check-off the items you've either already completed or that do not apply to your unique situation. Once you've done that, you will be left with a list of actionable items that you can tackle. This list is divided into the following sections: plumbing, laundry, bathroom, kitchen, and outdoors.

Plumbing

- Inspect all piping and faucets for leaks.** Check your water meter before and after your inspection.



- Install reduced-flow showerheads.** Make sure that they are rated to use less than 2.5 gallons per minute.
- Turn off all water before going away on vacation.** This will eliminate the possibility of leaks while you are away.
- If you have water softening equipment, make sure it is not regenerating and backwashing excessively.** If it is using too much water, you can reserve its use for kitchen use, bathing, and laundry by installing a bypass line. This would allow you to use untreated water for all other purposes.
- Insulate all hot water pipes.** Having to clear the "hot" line of cooled water is wasteful. This will reduce occurrences of hot water in the pipes getting cold over time and needing to be flushed.
- Install a circulating hot water system.** These are a more efficient option.

- Make sure that members of the household understand the importance of always turning water faucets off quickly and tightly.**
- Check all toilets for leaks.** To do this, use a Leak Detection Tablet in your toilet tank. If the color is visible in the bowl, you have a leak and should make the necessary repairs.
- Replace older toilets with toilets that use 1.28 gallons per flush or less.** Check with your utility to see if you qualify for a rebate.
- If replacing the toilet isn't an option, install a toilet-tank displacement device.** Adding a displacement device (bag or plastic bottle filled with water) will reduce the amount of water used per flush. This technique works best for older toilet models. Be sure the displacement device does not interfere with the operation of the tank. A toilet-tank displacement device can cut water use by 40 percent.
- Alternatively, adjust the float level of the toilet.** This will reduce the amount of water used to flush the toilet. Adjust the level only slightly at first as a test.
- Don't use the toilet as a trash disposal for bathroom waste.**

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Laundry

- Only use the washer with a full load OR use a lower water setting.** Replace old washers with an Energy Star® appliance that uses between 18 and 25 gallons per load. Older washers use up to 40 gallons per load.
- Only wash clothes when necessary.** Double-check clothing before washing. Washing clothes more often than necessary wastes water and increases wear on clothes.
- Check hoses regularly for leaks.**
- Pretreat stains to avoid rewashing.**
- Encourage your kids to change into play clothes when they get home from school.** This way, school clothing and play clothing can be worn several times before needing to be washed. Clothing and household items (sheets, towels, etc.) do not need to be washed separately.

Bathrooms

- Get used to taking 5-minute showers.** Keep it short and sweet! To keep track of time, try using a shower timer.
- Reduce the number of showers you take every week.** To really conserve water, you could replace some showers with sponge baths using only a small amount of water in a container.
- Turn off the water while you are applying soap or shampoo.** A shut-off valve could be installed to stop the flow without affecting the water temperature.
- Turn off the water while shaving, brushing teeth, etc.**
- Bathroom faucet aerators should only use 1.5 gallons per minute (gpm).** Replace them if they use more than that.

In the Kitchen

- Only run the dishwasher with a full load.** Scrape plates instead of rinsing them.
- Use a bowl of water to peel and clean vegetables and fruits.**
- To get warm water in the sink, turn on the hot water first, and then add cold water as necessary.** You will get warm water faster than turning on the tap and waiting for the right water temperature.
- Limit your use of the garbage disposal.** To do this, save food scraps and run the disposal only once to dispose of your waste. Even better, you could place food scraps in a compost bin rather than a garbage disposal.
- When boiling water or cooking food in a pot, use a tight-fitting lid.** This prevents water from boiling away and will also boil water or cook food faster.
- Or, use a tea kettle to boil water.**
- Avoid overcooking and water loss by timing the cooking process.**
- Use an appropriate pan size. Larger pans need more water for cooking.**
- Use a pressure cooker to save water.** They can also save you valuable time.
- Save leftover vegetable juices for soups or stews.**



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In the Kitchen (cont.)

- Use syrups and juices from canned goods to save water.
- If washing by hand, save water by using one sink of soapy water and a second sink of hot water for rinsing.
- Keep chilled water in a bottle in the refrigerator rather than running the tap for cold water to serve at dinner. You can shake the bottle before serving to ensure the water does not taste flat.

Outdoor use

- If you use a garden hose to hose down your car, wash it less often to save water.
- Or, use a bucket of warm soapy water to remove dirt from the car, and then hose it down only as a final rinse.
- Even better, wash your car when it's raining for a free rinse!
- For outdoor pools, be sure to cover them to prevent evaporation when not in use.
- Clean your swimming pool filter often to prevent having to change the water.
- Never use a hose to clean garage floors, sidewalks, or a driveway: use a broom instead!
- Plan your landscape and gardens to minimize the need for water.



- Adjust your sprinklers so that they're watering your lawn and garden, and not the street or sidewalk.
- Water early in the morning (before 10a.m) or later in the evening (after 4 p.m.) when temperatures are cooler and evaporation is minimized.
- Set it, but don't forget it! Whether you have a manual or automatic system, be sure to adjust your watering schedules throughout the irrigation season.
- Water established lawns about 1 inch per week (a bit more during hot, dry weather).
- Inspect your overall irrigation system for leaks, broken lines or blockage in the lines. A well maintained system will save you money, water, and time.
- Consider replacing some turf area with low water use/native plants and ornamental grasses. They are easier to maintain than turf, look beautiful, and require far less water.
- Group plants with like watering needs. Creating "watering zones" in your garden will allow you to give each plant the water it requires — not too much or too little.
- Add a shut-off nozzle to your garden hose and save about 5-7 gallons each minute your hose is on.
- Adjust your mower to a higher setting. A taller lawn provides shade to the roots and helps retain soil moisture, so your lawn requires less water.
- Apply the amount of water your soil can absorb. If run off or puddling occurs, break longer watering sessions into several short sessions allowing water to soak into the soil between each session.

Tired of pouring water and money down the drain?

**Watch the monthly savings add
up when you use these easy tips.**

Savings estimates based on a family of three.

Save up to...

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 175 | gallons per month
Run your washing machine and dishwasher only when full. |
| 250 | gallons per month
Rinse fruit and vegetables in a bowl of water instead of under running water. |
| 390 | gallons per month
Replace your conventional clothes washer with a new water-efficient model. |
| 675 | gallons per month
Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and shaving. |
| 690 | gallons per month
Install water-saving showerheads and limit showers to five minutes. |
| 870 | gallons per month
Replace older toilets with new low-flow models. |