



**State of Connecticut
Department of Public Health
Drinking Water Section**



Keeping Connecticut Healthy

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Water Efficiency Measures for Residences

Information provided by the Environmental Protection Agency

Bathrooms:

- Never use your toilet as a waste basket
- Do not let the water run while shaving or brushing teeth.
- Take short showers instead of tub baths. Turn off the water flow while soaping or shampooing.
- If you must use a tub, close the drain before turning on the water and fill the tub only half full. Bathe small children together.
- Never pour water down the drain when there may be another use for it -such as watering a plant or garden.

Kitchen and Laundry:

- Keep drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the faucet run until the water is cool.
- Wash fruits and vegetables in a basin. Use a vegetable brush.
- Do not use water to defrost frozen foods, thaw in the refrigerator overnight.
- Use a dishpan for washing and rinsing dishes.
- Scrape, rather than rinse, dishes before loading into the dishwasher.
- Add food wastes to your compost pile instead of using the garbage disposal.
- Operate the dishwasher only when completely full.
- Use the appropriate water level or load size selection on the washing machine.

Outside:

- Sweep driveways, sidewalks and steps rather than hosing off.
- Wash the car with water from a bucket, or consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- When using a hose, control the flow with an automatic shut-off nozzle.
- Avoid purchasing recreational water toys that require a constant stream of water.
- If you have a swimming pool, consider a new water-saving pool filter.
- Lower pool water level to reduce amount of water splashed out.
- Use a pool cover to reduce evaporation when pool is not being used.

Equipment:

- Repair all leaks. A leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons per day. To detect leaks in the toilet, add food coloring to the tank water. If the colored water appears in the bowl, the toilet is leaking. Toilet repair advice is available at <http://www.toiletology.com/index.shtml>.
- Install ultra-low flow toilets, or place a plastic container filled with water or gravel in the tank of your conventional toilet. Be sure it does not interfere with operation of the toilet's flush mechanism.
- Install low-flow aerators and showerheads.
- Consider purchasing a high efficiency washing machine which can save over 50% in water and energy use.

Water Efficiency Measures for Landscaping

Watering:

- Detect and repair all leaks in irrigation systems.
- Use properly treated wastewater for irrigation where available.
- Water the lawn or garden during the coolest part of the day (early morning is best). Do not water on windy days.
- Water trees and shrubs, which have deep root systems, longer and less frequently than shallow-rooted plants which require smaller amounts of water more often. Check with the local extension service for advice on the amount and frequency of watering needed in your area.
- Set sprinklers to water the lawn or garden only - not the street or sidewalk.
- Use soaker hoses and trickle irrigation systems.
- Install moisture sensors on sprinkler systems.

Planting:

- Have your soil tested for nutrient content and add organic matter if needed. Good soil absorbs and retains water better.
- Minimize turf areas and use native grasses.
- Use native plants in your landscape - they require less care and water than ornamental varieties.

Maintaining:

- Use mulch around shrubs and garden plants to reduce evaporation from the soil surface and cut down on weed growth.
- Remove thatch and aerate turf to encourage movement of water 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.
- Minimize or eliminate fertilizing which requires additional watering, and promotes new growth which will also need additional watering.

Ornamental Water Features:

- Do not install or use ornamental water features unless they recycle the water. Use signs to indicate that water is recycled. Do not operate during a drought.

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