

**In the dishwasher versus hand washing debate, using an automatic dishwasher to clean dishes generally wins for both water and energy efficiency. Most conventional dishwashers installed in U.S. households today use 7-14 gallons per load and account for less than 2 percent of the water used in an average American home. Despite the small portion of overall water consumption by dishwashers, newer machines are substantially more water-efficient than older models. Today the most efficient (full-size) machines use a maximum of 7 gallons per load - and some as little as 4.5 gallons. Energy savings also result from upgrading to an efficient dishwasher because fewer gallons of water need to be heated per cycle.**

### Choosing a Dishwasher

If you are considering replacing or installing dishwashers at your property, investigate the possibility of upgrading to a high-efficiency model. ENERGY STAR is a national program that labels dishwashers if they are energy efficient. This can also be a good indicator that the machine is also water efficient. Standard size Energy Star dishwashers use a maximum of 5.8 gallons per cycle.



If you purchase a high-efficiency dishwasher, check with the Oregon Department of Energy to see if residential or business energy tax credits are available.

### Pre-rinsing

The next time you turn on the faucet to pre-rinse your dinner plates, remember that five minutes of pre-rinsing in the sink using running water can use up to 12 gallons of water depending on your faucet. Using the pre-rinse cycle (if your dishwasher has one) to rinse dishes uses approximately one gallon of water.

Another way to prepare dishes for the dishwasher is to do what most appliance manufacturers recommend and scrape (not rinse) dishes before placing them in the dishwasher.

### Easy Dishwashing Water Conservation Tips!

- Operate the dishwasher with full loads only.
- If hand-washing dishes, wash them in a filled sink and let the water run only while rinsing items under the faucet.

### Choosing a Cycle

Most dishwashers provide a variety of cycle choices. Using the right wash cycle will increase cleaning and water efficiency. Choose the shortest wash cycle for lightly soiled loads and the “heavy” or “pot/pan” cycle for heavily soiled items. Using the heavier setting when it’s not needed won’t clean dishes any better – it will just waste water.

### Loading

Operate the dishwasher with full loads only. Load dishes properly so that water is able to reach all dish surfaces. Incorrect loading may cause part or the entire load to be rewashed. To help you load correctly follow these helpful [dishwasher loading tricks](#) from *Real Simple* magazine:

- Face plates toward the center of the dishwasher.
- Put bowls on the top rack facing center so water can reach all surfaces more easily.
- Place large platters and cookie sheets on the bottom rack along the outer edges to prevent them from blocking detergent and water from other dishes.
- Place large serving spoons too big for the silverware basket horizontally across the top rack and facedown to not collect water.
- Large pots, serving bowls, and casseroles belong on the bottom rack at a slight angle to ensure proper water contact.
- Glasses should go on the top rack between tines, not over them, to prevent them from rattling or coming out with tine marks.

Portland Water Bureau customers can request free water conservation devices, by going to our website, [www.portlandoregon.gov/water/efficiency](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/water/efficiency), or calling (503) 823-4527.