



Green Matters

Actions today for a healthier tomorrow

Reducing our water waste — summer water conservation

As most Portlanders know, we are approaching our hottest time of the year. August and September are historically the warmest and driest months of the summer, which is why Portlanders must conserve water whenever possible. Using water effectively and avoiding waste is essential to ensuring Portland's water availability in the future.

Tips for saving water around your home

Less than **3% of the Earth's water** supply is fresh, and, of that, only 1% is unfrozen and available for drinking. On average, Americans drink 110 million gallons of water a day, which is why it is so important to conserve whenever possible.

Outdoor:

Outdoor water use accounts for nearly half of the water used by a typical American home, and therefore offers the best opportunity to conserve.

Conservation Tips:

- Water plants before 10:00 a.m. Watering in the heat allows water to evaporate, while watering late in the day may promote fungus and lawn diseases.
- Water once a week and provide one to one-and-a-half inches of water. (If it's hot, you might have to water more often.)
- Don't cut grass too short; taller grass requires less water.
- Select plants and shrubs appropriate for the local climate. Plant in the fall when conditions are cooler and rainfall is plentiful.
- Use sprinklers only on large areas. Water small patches by hand.
- Use a hose nozzle and turn off the water while you wash your car.
- Purchase a **rain barrel** to drastically cut down on your outdoor water usage.

Indoor:

When it comes to water waste indoors, little choices make a big difference. Double check all faucets, pipes and hose connections for slow leaks. A slow leak can waste up to 20 gallons of water a day. Fixing it could save up to **6,000 gallons a year**. Also, make sure to limit your laundry and dishes to only full loads and avoid using extra cycles whenever possible.

Conservation Tips:

- Don't use running water to thaw food; defrost in the refrigerator or microwave.
- When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.
- When washing your hands, don't let the water run when you lather.
- Turn off the water while you shave and/or brush your teeth.
- Chill a container of water in the refrigerator instead of running the faucet for cool drinking water.
- Drop tissue in the trash instead of in the toilet to eliminate unnecessary flushing. (One flush of the toilet uses six-and-a-half gallons of water).
- When upgrading kitchen or bathroom equipment, buy appliances designed to minimize water use.

Low Volume Shower Heads

- Shower heads are **measured by flow**, or the number of gallons they deliver per minute (gpm). Flow is regulated by water pressure, measured in pounds per square inch (psi).
- An inexpensive low volume shower head can pay for itself in water, sewer and energy savings in less than a year. The average **low volume shower head** can reduce the water usage of a five-minute shower from **40 gallons to 15**. You can even get a **free low volume shower head** to try.
- A five-minute shower uses at least 20 gallons of water with an older unrestricted shower head. A low flow uses only four gallons per minute.

