

Water Words

Water Conservation—Waste Not, Want Not

How much water do you use?

The average Californian uses 185 gallons of water per day. This number has increased from 5 to 10 gallons in 1900. How much water do you actually use:

- 5 to 7 gallons to flush a toilet
- .25 gallon to wash your hands
- 15 to 25 gallons to run a dishwasher
- 20 gallons to wash dishes by hand
- 35 gallons to water a small lawn
- 25 to 50 gallons to take a shower
- 40 to 50 gallons to take a bath
- 30 to 35 gallons to wash a load of clothes in a washing machine
- 2 to 6 gallons to brush your teeth



The earth is known as the "water planet," since approximately 80% of its surface is water. Nearly 97% of the earth's water, however, is salty or otherwise undrinkable. Another 2% is locked in ice caps and glaciers. That leaves just 1% for human, animal and plant life.

The California Department of Water Resources estimates the state's developed water supply at 78 million acre-feet (an acre-foot is approximately 326,000 gallons, enough water to cover a football field about one foot deep.) Of that, 46% is used by the environment, 43% is used by farms and 11% is used by homes and businesses.

Orange County depends on imported water from the Colorado River and the State Water Project for approximately 50% of its total supply; the other 50% comes from groundwater. Although our local water providers have sufficient water for current needs, water resources in California are diminishing as population increases.

The largest, least expensive, and most environmentally sound source of water to meet California's future needs is the water currently being wasted in every sector of our economy. It is estimated that one-third of California's urban water use—more than 2.3 million acre-feet—can be saved with existing technology. Even without changes in technology, it is estimated that indoor residential use could be reduced by approximately 890,000 acre-feet per year - almost 40% - by replacing inefficient toilets, washing machines, showerheads and dishwashers and by reducing the level of leaks.

Remember...

- ~ **Reducing water demand begins at home:** Be water wise. About 60 percent of all urban water is used outdoors. The next time you water, keep in mind the water tips found on the reverse side of this article.
- ~ **Capturing, treating and delivering water is costly:** The journey water takes to your tap is an expensive trip. Water comes from either a surface source (lake or river) or is pumped from underground wells and is treated before it is distributed to homes and businesses. Developing new water supplies and building new treatment facilities is expensive.
- ~ **Water supply is limited:** Laguna Woods does not currently have access to groundwater; we are wholly dependent on imported water to meet all of our drinking water demands.
- ~ **Wasting water costs money:** Water costs you money—reducing your water use saves you money.

Did You Know...

- Although a person can live without food for more than a month, a person can only live without water for approximately a week.
- One inch of rainfall drops 7,000 gallons of water.

Over 42,000 gallons of water (enough to fill a 30x50 foot swimming pool) are needed to grow and prepare a typical Thanksgiving dinner for eight.

- Water expands by nearly one tenth of its volume when it freezes - 1 cubic foot of water becomes 1.09 cubic feet of ice.
- Every 24 hours about 250 cubic miles of water evaporates from the sea and the land.
- Households in the United States turn on water faucets an average of 70 times daily; it is estimated that up to 50% of the water people use could be saved by implementing simple conservation methods.



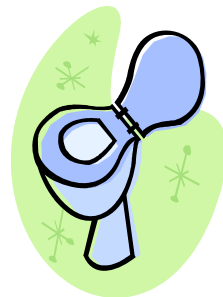
What You Can Do to Help Conserve Water

If we waste water, someday we may run short. That's why it's important to conserve. We can conserve just by the way we do things. Try and do one thing each day that will result in saving water. Don't worry if the saving is minimal—each drop counts. You can make a difference.

- ⇒ When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and one with rinse water.
- ⇒ Run your washing machine and dishwasher only when they are full.
- ⇒ Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Consider composting.
- ⇒ Keep a pitcher or bottle of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap until water is cold.
- ⇒ Wash your produce in the sink or pan that is partially filled with water instead of under running water.
- ⇒ Use a layer of organic mulch around plants to reduce evaporation.
- ⇒ Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway and sidewalk.
- ⇒ Collect the water you use rinsing produce and reuse it to water houseplants.
- ⇒ Time your shower to keep it under 5 minutes.
- ⇒ Install low flow toilets, water efficient dishwashers and showerheads.
- ⇒ When you clean your fish tank, use the water you have drained on your house plants—it is rich in nitrogen and phosphorus.
- ⇒ Plug the bathtub before turning on the water, then adjust the temperature as the tub fills up.
- ⇒ Don't use running water to thaw food; thaw overnight in the refrigerator or use a microwave.
- ⇒ When doing laundry, match the water level to the size of the load.
- ⇒ While fertilizers promote plant growth, they also increase water consumption. Apply minimum amounts.
- ⇒ Turn off the water when you brush your teeth and shave.
- ⇒ Drop that tissue in the trash instead of flushing it.
- ⇒ Soak your pots and pans instead of running water while you scrape them.
- ⇒ Listen for dripping faucets and fix them.
- ⇒ Cook food with as little water as possible. This will also retain more of the nutrients.
- ⇒ Bathe your pets outdoors in an area in need of water.
- ⇒ Use dropped or leftover ice cubes—dump them in a potted plant.

Remember to use only the amount of water you actually need.

Be Water Wise



Leaks inside your toilet can waste up to 200 gallons of water per day. You can pick up non-toxic leak detector dye tablets at City Hall that can be used to check for leaks. Drop them in the toilet tank. If, after a few minutes, you see blue water in the toilet bowl, you have a leak. The tablets are non-toxic and harmless if swallowed. If you find a leak, have it fixed. In the long run it will save you money.