

# Water Conservation Checklist

## Check your toilet for leaks.

A leak in your toilet may be wasting more than 100 gallons of water a day. To check, put a little food coloring in your toilet tank. If, without flushing, the coloring begins to appear in the bowl, you have a leak. Adjust or replace the flush valve or call a plumber.

## Stop using your toilet as an ashtray or wastebasket.

Every time you flush a cigarette butt, facial tissue or other small bit of trash down the toilet, you waste two to seven gallons of water.

## Put two plastic bottles in your toilet tank.

Your toilet can probably flush just as efficiently with less water than it now uses. To reduce water waste, put an inch or two of sand or pebbles in each of two plastic bottles to weigh them down. Fill them with water and put them in your toilet tank, away from the operating mechanism. In an average home, the bottles may displace ten gallons of water or more a day. It's a much better idea than a brick in the toilet, because bricks can disintegrate and damage plumbing.

## Take shorter showers.

Long, hot showers waste five to ten gallons every unneeded minute. Limit your showers to the time it takes to soap up, wash, and rinse.

## Install water-saving shower heads or flow restrictors

Most shower heads put out five to ten gallons per minute; three gallons per minute is sufficient for a refreshing shower. Your local hardware or plumbing supply stocks inexpensive water-saving shower heads you can install easily. For even less, you can purchase a small plastic insert to limit flow through your present shower head. Water-saving shower heads and restrictors are available for free at the VVCSO office.

## Turn off the water after wetting your toothbrush.

After you have wet your toothbrush and filled a glass for rinsing your mouth, turn off the tap water.

## Rinse your razor in the sink.

Before shaving, partially fill the sink with warm water. This will rinse the blade just as well and use less water.

## Check pipes and faucets for leaks.

Even the smallest drip from a worn washer can waste 50 gallons or more a day. Larger leaks can waste hundreds.

## Use your automatic dishwasher for full loads only.

Every time you run your dishwasher, you use about 25 gallons of water.

## If you wash dishes by hand, don't leave the water running for rinsing.

If you have two sinks, fill one with soapy water and one with rinse water. If you have but one sink, gather all the washed dishes in the dish rack and rinse them with an inexpensive spray device.

## Don't let the faucet run while you clean vegetables.

You can serve the same purpose by putting a stopper in the sink and filling the sink with clean water.

**Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the refrigerator.**

This ends the wasteful practice of running tap water to cool it off for drinking.

**Use your automatic clothes washer for full loads only.**

Your automatic washer uses 30 to 35 gallons of water in a cycle. That's a lot of water for three T-shirts.

**Plant drought resistant trees and plants.**

There are many beautiful trees and plants that thrive in California with far less watering than other species.

**Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants.**

A layer of mulch will slow the evaporation of moisture.

**Use a broom to clean driveways, sidewalks and steps.**

Using a hose to push around a few leaves and scraps of paper can waste hundreds and hundreds of gallons of water.

**Don't run the hose while washing your car.**

Soap down your car with a pail of soapy water. Then use a hose just to rinse it off.

**Teach your children that your hose and sprinkler are not toys.**

Few things are more cheerful than the sound of children playing under a hose or sprinkler on a hot day. Unfortunately, there are also few things more wasteful of precious water.

**Water your lawn only when it needs it.**

Watering frequently can be very wasteful as it doesn't allow for cool spells or rainfall that can reduce the need for watering. A good way to see if your lawn needs watering is to step on some grass. If the grass springs back up when you move, it doesn't need water.

**Water during the cool parts of the day.**

Early morning is better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus.

**Deep-soak your lawn.**

When you do water your lawn, do it just long enough for water to seep down to the roots, where it won't evaporate quickly, and where it will do the most good. A light sprinkling, which sits on the surface, will simply evaporate and be wasted. A slow, steady fall of water is the best way to irrigate your lawn.

**Don't water the gutter.**

Position your sprinklers so water lands on your lawn or garden, not on concrete, where it does no good. Avoid watering on windy days when much of your water will be carried off before it ever hits the ground.

**Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, faucets and couplings.**

Leaks outside the house may not seem as unbearable since they don't mess up the floors or drive you crazy at night. But they can be just as wasteful as leaks in the line from the water meter, even more wasteful.