

The Water Conservation Checklist



Try this checklist to see where you stand and what you can do to help.

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 five to seven gallons of water.

Put two plastic bottles in your toilet tank.

Your toilet can flush just as efficiently with less water than it now uses. To cut down water waste, put an inch or two of sand or pebbles in each of two plastic quart bottles to weigh them down. Fill them with water replace the lid and put them in your toilet tank, safely away from the operating mechanisms. Better yet, replace your old toilet with a new low-flow toilet. They are readily available in a variety of styles and colors. Opt for the reliable brand names.

Take shorter showers.

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

Install water-saving shower heads or flow restrictors.

Most shower heads put out five to ten gallons of water a minute, while three gallons is actually enough for a refreshing cleansing shower. Your local hardware or plumbing supply store stocks inexpensive water-saving shower heads that you can install yourself. For even less money, you can purchase a small plastic insert that will limit flow through your present shower head.

Turn off the water after you wet your toothbrush.

After you have wet your toothbrush and filled a glass for rinsing your mouth, there is no need to keep water pouring down the drain.

Rinse your razor in the sink.

Before shaving, partially fill your sink with a few inches of warm water. This will rinse your blade just as efficiently as running water, and far less wastefully.

Check faucets and pipes for leaks.

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

Use your automatic dishwasher only for full loads.

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 bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator.

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

Use your automatic washing machine only for full loads.

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 Utah 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 sprinklers are not toys.

There are a few things more cheerful than the sound of happy 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.

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.

Water during the cool parts of the day.

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

Don't water the gutter.

Position your sprinklers in such a way that 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 may 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 floor 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.

Your Score

If you've checked :

- 19-23 boxes you're doing an excellent job saving water, energy and protecting our environment.

- 12-18 means you're doing a good job, but there's room for improvement.
 - Less than 12 means you need to change your habits.
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