

# Water Conservation Tips

## Indoors



### Leaks

- A slow drip can waste 15-20 gallons of water per day.
- Dripping faucets are usually due to worn washers or “O” rings.
- Leaky toilets are usually due to a worn flapper. A leaky toilet can be determined by either hearing the toilet running or by adding a food dye in the back of the tank. If the dye ends up in the bowl, the flapper is worn and needs to be replaced.

### Bathroom

The bathroom is the area of greatest water use indoors. The toilet is responsible for 40% of total indoor use, and bathing is responsible for 30% of total indoor use.

- Install a low-flow toilet. Older toilets use between 5 to 7 gallons per flush, while low-flow toilets use 1.5 gallons or less per flush.
- For older toilets – put a water filled plastic container, quart jar or brick in the tank to reduce the amount of water used per flush.
- Don’t use the toilet as a wastebasket.
- Install a low-flow showerhead. Older showerheads can use 5-8 gallons per minute, while a low-flow showerhead uses 2.5 gallons or less per minute.
- Shorten your showers or turn off the water while soaping/lathering.
- Install high efficiency, low-flow faucet aerators both in the bathroom and in the kitchen. Aerators mix air with water from the faucet cutting down the flow of water.
- Turn off the faucet while shaving or brushing your teeth.

### Kitchen & Laundry

- Load the dishwasher and clothes washer to capacity. Also use them during non-peak hours. Peak hours are 6-9 am and 4-7 pm.
- Purchase low-flow dishwashers and clothes washers.
- Use less water when cooking by keeping lids on pans.
- Don’t use running water to defrost food or wash vegetables. Instead, plug the drain or use a pan of water to defrost or clean food.
- Use the garbage disposal sparingly.
- Keep bottled water in the refrigerator rather than running the faucet to get cold water.

### Other Indoor Tips

- Insulate hot water pipes to reduce the time for receiving hot water.
- Use recycled water (without chemicals) on your houseplants.

## Outdoors

*The importance of outdoor water conservation is the fact that 62% of the average annual water use is outdoors.*

## **Irrigation**

- Visual Test: Water when 30% of your lawn looks wilted. Signs of wilt include footprints that remain and a dull bluish-gray appearance to the lawn.
- Adjust watering to the weather. Don't water after a rainstorm. Reduce watering when the weather turns cooler.
- Use drip irrigation for individual trees, shrubs, and even perennials in garden areas.
- Hand water dry spots.
- Automatic irrigation systems need to be checked on a regular basis (at least monthly) for broken or clogged sprinkler heads or other problems.
- Make sure sprinklers are not spraying onto roads, driveways, sidewalks, and other hard surfaces. Water can be saved and run-off avoided by cycling sprinklers with shorter run times. For example, rather than running each zone of your sprinkler system for 30 minutes, consider running each zone for 8 to 10 minutes in three cycles. This will allow the water to be absorbed deep into the soil which provides for a deep root zone and healthy lawn.
- Know your soil by doing a soil test. Take a handful of soil and try to roll it into a ribbon. If this is possible, you have clay soil. If it only forms a ball, you have loam soil. If it falls apart, you have sandy soil.
- Xeriscape – for turf areas that are difficult to irrigate or receive little or no use, look at plant alternatives that take less water.
- Hydrozoning – Group plants with similar water requirements together and water according to plant needs. For example, have turf and non-turf areas on separate irrigation zones.

## **Turf Grass**

- Increase mowing height to 2 ½" – 3". This promotes deeper roots.
- Mow less frequently to reduce the stress on turf. Never cut more than one-third of the length in one mowing.
- Sharpen your mowing blades. A cleaner cut grass blade heals quicker and takes less water.
- Avoid heavy fertilization during the heat of summer. Fertilization stimulates growth and increases water needs. If fertilizing during the summer, use one with low nitrogen.

## **Other Outdoor Tips**

- Mulch planting areas. This helps to hold moisture and discourages weeds.
- Keeping weeds under control reduces competition for water.
- Compost to improve the soil.
- Clean sidewalks, driveways and gutters with a broom rather than water.

## **Water Check Program**

A landscape Water Check is a series of tests (lasts 60-90 minutes) on your watering system to determine how much water your system puts out (precipitation rate), the soil absorption rate (infiltration), and the evenness of the water application (distribution)

uniformity or efficiency). A homeowner is left with recommendations and a customized irrigation schedule.

The Water Check Program is a free service to homeowners, sponsored by Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District and their Partnering Agencies through efforts of the Utah State University Extension. Draper City is a Partnering Agency.

Appointments are scheduled by calling the

**Slow the Flow Hotline**  
**1-877-728-3420**

We hope you will use this information to water more efficiently and have fewer lawn problems throughout the season. Water checks are offered from May through August each summer.



## Basic Lawn Care



**Mowing:** Mow often enough that no more than 1/3 of the length is cut. Mowing removes a portion of the photosynthesizing plant, which lessens the supply of carbohydrates (energy) needed for root growth.

Don't mow short. The depth of the grass roots is roughly equal to the height of the grass, so if you mow really short you will be creating a wimpy, water demanding lawn (roots will only be in top layer of soil, which dries out quickly). For example, when your grass is about three (3) inches tall, mow to no less than a height of two (2) inches. This takes off 1/3.

Leave the grass clippings on the lawn. They are a valuable source of nitrogen. If clumps are left after mowing, then you are not mowing often enough. Using a mulching mower pushes more of the clippings down into the turf and out of sight. If you don't have this type of mower, at least make sure your blades are sharp and the grass is dry when you mow.

**Irrigation:** It is estimated that half the water currently applied to our lawns is wasted. Water less frequently and deeper! Wet the soil down to 6-8 inches. Depending on how much water your system puts out, this may take 30-40 minutes. Water no more than twice a week.

Kentucky blue Grass, the grass in most of our lawns, is a cool season grass, meaning it naturally goes dormant when the hot summer comes.

**Fertilization:** Two fertilizer applications are sufficient – one in the spring and one in the fall. Use high nitrogen fertilizers for the lawn, at roughly two pounds nitrogen per 1000 square feet (follow instruction on the fertilizer bag). Fertilizing too often creates stress on your lawn and lowers disease resistance. A late fall application will suffice for spring green. A late spring application, coupled with mulching when you mow, will keep your lawn looking good through the summer and into the fall.

**Dethatching:** Thatch is a layer of stems and roots that accumulates between the soil and turf surface. A thin layer is fine, but a thick layer (greater than ½ inch) can cause the turf to become weak and more susceptible to drought, diseases, and insects. Water has a tougher time permeating this thick layer and will be slow to penetrate the soil where it is needed. Raking with a stiff metal rake will get rid of thatch, and most lawn care companies have dethatching machines. Leaving grass clippings on the lawn does not increase the thatch layer.

**Aerating:** Aeration removes small cores of grass and soil down to a depth of 3-4 inches, getting needed air to the roots. Aeration is needed when a lawn has become compacted by foot or vehicular traffic. Lawn care companies have aerating machines or you can rent one. Garden stores also have aerating tools that are okay for small areas.

**Weeds:** A healthy lawn will generally not have severe weed problems, so the first line of defense is to keep the grass healthy by watering and fertilizing correctly. Keep weeds in control instead of trying for total eradication.

