



•••• Where does Water? Go •



To understand the importance of water conservation, it helps to understand where water goes. Water conservation is good for everyone. Because Louisiana has such a wet climate and has never experienced serious water shortages, most people don't think about conserving water. But now, water conservation is increasingly important, even during rainy weather.

Reducing your water use can mean substantial savings on your sewer, energy and water bills. Depletion of some underground aquifers and the ever-increasing intrusion of salt water mean we are using our drinking water faster than nature replaces it. For those with septic tanks, conserving water reduces wear and tear on your system and requires less energy for pumping well water. So, using less water now helps to reduce both the current and future costs of supplying ample, clean and inexpensive water to your home.

Beyond the Home

Widespread reduction in water usage could reduce the need for new or expanded sewage treatment facilities. If the amount of water every family uses is reduced, so is the volume of water entering our sewage treatment plants. The tax dollars saved by not having to expand existing plants can be used to improve water treatment techniques.

We can decrease water consumption in our homes by 15% to 20% without major discomfort or expense. All we have to do is acquire good water use habits. Many conservation techniques are simple, common sense ideas.

The first step in conserving water around your home is to check for and eliminate any leaks in faucets, toilets, hoses and pipes. At the water pressure found in most household plumbing systems, just a very small water leak can waste up to 6,000 gallons of water per month. A steady faucet drip wastes 20 gallons a day. A leaking toilet can waste 200 gallons of water a day without making a sound.

Water conservation is as simple as thinking before you turn on the faucet. Many of us developed our water use habits before the time of water shortages and water quality problems. Now that we understand the potential impact of the way we use water, it should be easy to make water conservation a part of our everyday lives.

What You Can Do

Use these simple guidelines to make sure you aren't wasting water without knowing it:

- Test for a leaking toilet by adding food coloring to the tank. Without flushing, note if any color appears in the bowl after 30 minutes. If color appears, you have a leak.
- Check your water meter while no water is being used. If the dial moves, you have a leak.
- Turn off your water and hot water heater when going on a trip.
- Run your dishwasher only when you have a full load. Use the cycles with the least number of washes and rinses.
- Don't run water continuously when washing dishes in the sink.
- Add your garbage to the compost or trash instead of putting it down the garbage disposal. Disposals not only use a great deal of water, but they also add solids to an already overloaded sewer system.
- Wash clothes only when you have a full load. Set the water level control appropriately. The permanent press cycles may use an additional 10 to 20 gallons of water.
- Buy a suds-saver washing machine when you need to buy a new machine.
- Install a water conservation shower head. They are inexpensive and reduce flow by at least 25%.
- Place two half-gallon plastic bottles filled with water in your toilet tank. This cuts the number of gallons used per flush from five to four.
- Take short showers instead of a bath. Remember, baths can use 30 to 50 gallons of water.
- Do not let water run in the sink while shaving, brushing your teeth or lathering your face and hands.
- Water your lawn and wash your car only when absolutely necessary.
- Wash one section of the car at a time and rinse it quickly. Use a hose that is high pressure, low-volume and has a pistol grip nozzle.
- Water your lawn during the coolest part of the day to avoid rapid evaporation.



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