

WATER CONSERVATION

Frequently Asked Questions

Why Is Water Conservation Important?

Marylanders make use of approximately 1.4 billion gallons of fresh water daily for household, industrial and agricultural needs. For a household of four that's about 400 gallons of water daily. In Maryland we're accustomed to having water available at the twist of a faucet and as a result we often overlook the importance of conserving water. As our population continues to grow, however, demands on our precious water resources will increase. To ensure adequate water resources for future generations, it is critical to embrace water conservation measures in our daily routines

Practicing water conservation on a regular basis will help to preserve resources, save you money, prolong the life of our infrastructures and protect the environment.

What Is Maryland Doing To Promote Water Conservation?

The State has developed a long term vision starting with a three-pronged approach to promote water conservation across the State, concentrating in three areas: State facilities, water utilities and public education and outreach.

State Facilities

In Maryland all State facilities are required to conduct water use audits and take actions to reduce their water use. Any building that is owned, leased, or managed by the State is required to evaluate their water use and implement water conservation measures.

Water Utilities

The State's 29 major water utilities (together serving more than 3.5 million individuals) are required to conduct annual water audits of their systems to determine the amount of water use and unaccounted water loss. If an audit indicates that the utility has more than 10 percent water loss, the system must develop and implement a water conservation plan. In addition, water utilities selected for grant and loan funding are required to prepare a water conservation plan as a condition of receiving the funds. Projects are more likely to receive funding if a plan is already in place.

Public Education

The Maryland Department of the Environment has undertaken a public awareness initiative to educate Maryland's citizens about the importance of conserving water. For more information, contact the Maryland Department of the Environment's Water Supply Program at 410-537-3702, or at mde.maryland.gov.





TIPS FOR SAVING WATER OUTSIDE THE HOME

Forty percent of total household water supply is used outside the home. Lawn maintenance, irrigation and car washing are just a few of the ways water resources can potentially be wasted outside the home. Follow these tips to reduce unnecessary water use outdoors:

Landscape irrigation

- Plant regionally appropriate, low-water use and native plants; once established, these plants will require little or no watering.
- Limit grass areas and use trees, shrubs and other plants that require less water to landscape your yard. Grass turf requires 30 to 50 percent more water than shrubs and other groundcover.

If irrigation is required:

- Install efficient irrigation systems such as drip irrigation, soil soakers and efficient sprinkler systems. Set sprinklers for lawn and garden only, don't water the street or sidewalk.
- Water the lawn only when the ground is dry and preferably no more than once a week: The amount of water used by a sprinkler in one hour is equal to the daily water needs of a family of four.
- Water the lawn and garden during the coolest part of the day (preferably morning) and never water on windy days - as much as 30 percent of water used can be lost to evaporation by watering midday.
- Minimize weeds to decrease competition for water.

Other outdoor use

- Repair or replace leaking hoses and sprinklers.
- Always use an automatic shut-off nozzle on hoses.
- Use a broom rather than a hose to clean decks, sidewalks and other paved areas. Five minutes of running the hose uses 25 gallons of water.
- Collect rainwater for reuse in the garden using a rain barrel.
- Cover swimming pools to prevent evaporation: An average uncovered pool loses about an inch of water a week because of evaporation.

TIPS FOR SAVING WATER INSIDE THE HOME

Nationwide, approximately 70 percent of the total household water supply is used inside the home in three main areas: the kitchen, the bathroom and the laundry room. Follow these tips to reduce water use indoors:

In the kitchen

- Make sure all faucets are tightly turned off and not leaking. A leaking faucet could waste up to 4,000 gallons of water per year. Replace old faucets with new water-efficient models or install aerators to reduce flow.
- Consider water use when purchasing a new dishwasher. New water and energy efficient models use 20 percent less water. Run the dishwasher only when full, and don't pre-rinse dishes before loading into dishwasher.
- De-frost food in refrigerator instead of using running water; a running faucet uses about a gallon of water per minute.
- Use a dishpan or plug the sink when hand-washing dishes.
- Keep a container of water in the refrigerator rather than waiting for cold water from faucet.

In the bathroom

- Install low flow toilets.
- Test all toilets regularly for leaks; a leaking toilet could waste up to 200 gallons per day.
- Do not use the toilet as a wastebasket; each flush of a standard toilet uses over three gallons.
- Replace old showerheads; low flow showerheads can save three gallons per minute.
- Take shorter showers.
- Turn off the water when brushing teeth or shaving.

In the laundry

- Run full loads of laundry instead of many small loads.
- Consider energy and water efficiency when purchasing new laundry machines; newer models use 40 percent less water and can save up to 6,000 gallons per year.

