PRACTICE GOOD WATER-USE HABITS

Kitchen

- Run the dishwasher with a full load to save water, energy, detergent, and money.
- Use the dishwasher's short wash cycle if your dishes are only lightly soiled.
- Dry scrape dishes instead of rinsing them and do not pre-rinse dishes if you are using the dishwasher.
- Fill a basin or the sink with soapy water instead of letting the water run continuously when washing dishes by hand. Soak pans rather than scrubbing them while the water is running.
- Rinse produce in a pan of cold water instead of letting the water run.
- Transfer frozen foods to the refrigerator to defrost the night before you need them instead of letting water run over them.
- Keep a container of water in the refrigerator rather than running tap water until it is cool enough to drink.
- Limit the use of garbage disposals and consider composting.

Laundry room

- Wash only full loads.
- Match the load setting with the amount of laundry to be washed if you must wash partial loads.
- Use the shortest wash cycle for lightly soiled loads as it uses less water than other cycles.

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Bathroom

- Don't use your toilet as a trash can for paper and facial tissues.
- Turn the water off when you aren't using it.
- Run water just to wet and rinse the toothbrush instead of allowing the water to run while brushing your teeth.
- Apply the same idea when washing your hands.
- Use only as much water as you really need.
- Take shorter showers instead of a bath.
- Use water-efficient showerheads, which often use less water than a bath.
- Turn off the water while you are shampooing your hair.

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WATER IQ℠
www.wateriq.org

Visit the following Web site for additional information.

www.epa.gov/watersense

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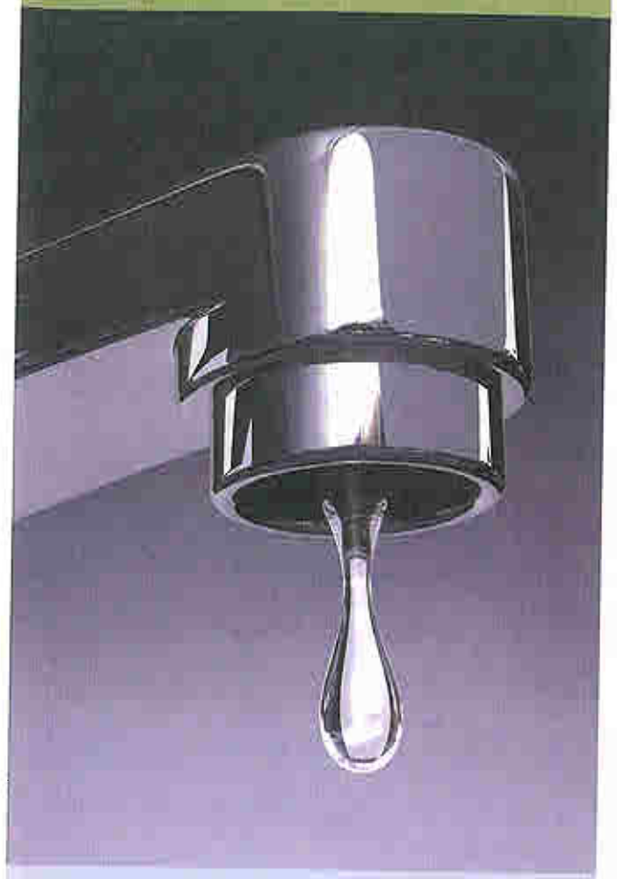
CONSERVING WATER INDOORS



YOU CAN EASILY SAVE a minimum of 20 gallons per day just by installing water-efficient fixtures and reducing leaks.

Per capita water use in Texas averages 164 gallons per person per day. By adopting water-saving measures, you can reduce that amount and save money. Making a habit of conservation makes sense. It protects the water resources of both current and future Texans.

INSTALL WATER-EFFICIENT APPLIANCES

Toilets: Toilets are by far the main source of water use in the home, accounting for approximately 30 percent of indoor water use. They also happen to be a major source of leaks and/or inefficiency. Under state and federal law, toilets must not exceed 1.6 gallons per flush. High-efficiency toilets (HETs) go beyond that standard and use less than 1.3 gallons per flush.

- Over the course of your lifetime, you will likely flush the toilet nearly 140,000 times. If you install a high-efficiency toilet, you can save 4,000 gallons per year.
- Many local utilities offer rebates to replace old toilets.
- Toilets are the single largest water user in a home. A leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons of water per day, and it is estimated that nearly 20 percent of all toilets leak.

To determine if the toilet is leaking, take these steps:

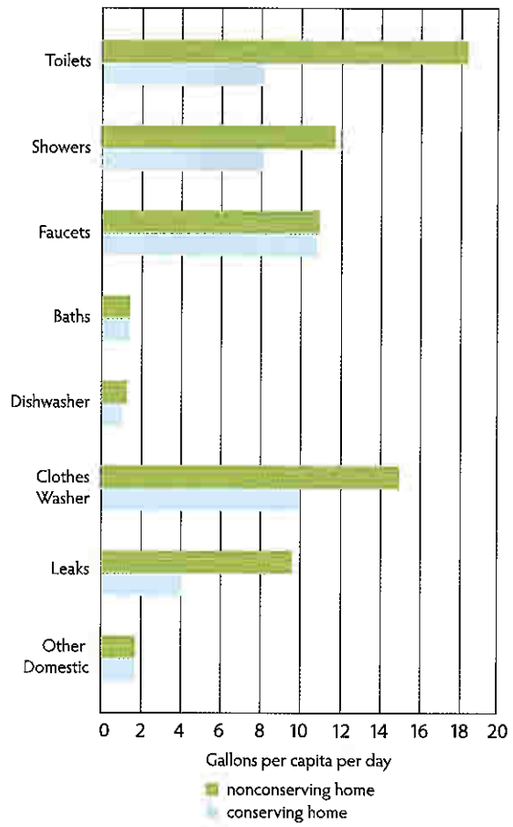
- Remove the tank lid after the tank has stopped filling.
- Check for a visible leak or to hear water running.

To find other, less obvious leaks, perform the following test:

- Mix a few drops of food coloring or place a dye capsule or tablet (available from home improvement centers and many utilities) into the water in the toilet tank.
- Do not flush the toilet.
- Wait about 10 minutes and if the dye appears in the toilet bowl, the toilet has a silent leak.

Check toilet parts regularly. Replace worn parts with good quality parts as necessary, and retest to make sure the leak has been fixed.

Average indoor water use in conserving versus nonconserving single-family homes in North America



The average indoor use in a conserving North American single-family home is 45.2 gallons per capita per day, and in a nonconserving home it is 69.3 gallons per capita per day.

Source: Handbook of Water Use and Conservation, 2001.

Showers: Take shorter showers. A 5-minute shower uses only 10–25 gallons. A full bathtub, however, can require up to 70 gallons of water.

Installing a water efficient showerhead is one of the single most effective water-saving steps you can take inside your home.

Sinks: Installing faucet aerators on sinks is a simple, cost-effective way to save water. The faucet's efficiency can double without sacrificing performance. Aerators are inexpensive and do not require special adapters.

Faucet leaks are usually caused by worn washers or "O" rings (for a washerless faucet), which are inexpensive and easily replaced. Note the faucet brand and take the original part with you to a home improvement center.

Washing Machines: When buying a washer, look for a high-efficiency model that has adjustable water levels for different load sizes. High-efficiency washers use 35 to 55 percent less water and 50 percent less energy. They also require less detergent, rinse more thoroughly, are less abrasive on clothes, and can fit larger capacity loads in the same size drum.

Dishwashers: High-efficiency dishwashers use a maximum of 7 gallons per load, but some use as little as 4.5 gallons. Replacing an older model with a water-efficient model could cut dishwasher water use in half. Look for energy efficiency features to cut costs even more.

DON'T WAIT TO FIX LEAKS!

Leaks could account for 10 percent or more of your water bill and waste both water and energy.

The water meter can be used to check for invisible or unnoticed leaks.

- Turn off all faucets and water-using appliances.
- Read the dial on the water meter and record the reading. (It is often located along the property line near the street.)
- Recheck the meter after 15 to 20 minutes.

If no water has been used and the reading has changed, a leak is occurring somewhere in the plumbing system. The services of a plumber or trained water utility employee are often required to locate and fix these invisible leaks.