

Conservation Checklist

by Patty Sipe

Saving water is like any other habit. The more you do it, the more natural it becomes. Become water-wise, it's fun to find more ways to conserve.

Be sure to save this check list. Hang it in a handy place - like your utility room. Use it to do a full leak check on your house four times a year. Just seeing it will remind you that conservation pays and preserves precious water.

Sometimes a small investment can pay large dividends. For example, buying a low-flush toilet can save over 18,000 gallons of water a year! It's up to all of us - individuals, businesses, industry - to save the earth's resources. So remember, wherever you go, take your water-consciousness along. What works at home, works at the office!

In General

- Watch for leaks. Pay attention to the signs and symptoms of plumbing, pool and spa leaks as outlined below. Do a routine indoor/outdoor check every three months, or call professionals to do one for you.
- Check all faucets for drips. If a drip fills an 8-ounce glass every quarter hour, it will lose about 180 gallons per month. That's 2,160 gallons a year, enough for 30+ showers or baths! Drips can usually be fixed by replacing inexpensive washers or valve seats.
- Install flow restrictors or other conservation devices on all faucets. With these in the shower alone, you can cut your water use from about 5 to 10 gallons per minute to as low as 1.4 to 3 gallons per minute.

Pools and Spas

- Do regular leak checks-ups. A leak in the pool area can waste 1,000 gallons or more per day. Fill a large bucket of water half full mark the top of the water line in the bucket. Set bucket in pool on the first step. Mark the top of the water line on the outside of the bucket. Wait 24hrs. and check to see if the water levels are the same. If the pool is lower than the inside "you have a pool leak".
- Pay particular attention to your automatic water filler. If it's faulty, your water bill suffers.
- Keep track of the amount of chemicals you normally use. An increase in quantity used can also be a sign of a leak.
- Use a pool/spa cover to cut down on water loss (and heating costs) caused by evaporation.

In the Kitchen | Laundry

- One of the most common areas for water loss is the kitchen sink area. Check under cupboards once a week for wet spots or bowed cabinetry.
- Keep drinking water in the refrigerator so you don't have to run the tap until the water gets cold enough to drink.
- Scrape food from plates with a utensil, not running water.
- Don't continuously run water in the sink. Hand wash dishes in a sink full of soapy water; rinse all at once. Soak hard-to clean pans overnight.

In the Bathroom

- Check sinks for drips or leaks once a week.
- Check toilets for leaks. Drop a teaspoon of food coloring into the tank. If the color appears in the bowl after 15 minutes, have the "flapper" valve replaced. If leaks continue, have a professional check your system.

- Decrease the amount of water used per flush. Replace regular or older toilets with new ultra-low flush models or put water displacement devices inside every toilet tank. Make them from plastic water bottles weighted down with pebbles. **DO NOT PUT BRICKS IN YOUR TANK.** They can dissolve and clog siphon jets.

Outdoors

- Walk around your property once a week to look for spongy or mushy ground where broken pipes might be hidden.
- Water lawns during the coolest times of the day, before 8:00 a.m. or in the evening.
- Deep-soak lawns long enough for water to seep down to the roots --- pop-up spray heads only need 5-10 minutes this time of year and rotor heads need 20-25 minutes. Don't water more than twice a week as the growing season is ebbing.

Other Conservation Tips

- Use a commercial car wash.
- Drink Tap water

Make your move today toward wiser use of our resources. When it comes to conservation, every effort helps. Check out what you can do; then make it a habit!

Save a resource. It's money in the bank.