



Water Conservation Tips

Saving water is a good environmental strategy at any time, but especially during times of low rainfall or drought. The contribution of individual citizens during a water emergency (drought) can save an enormous amount of water. Here are some tips to help you save water at home:

In the Bathroom

- Replace older plumbing fixtures with newer, low-flow models or install water-saving devices, such as faucet aerators.
- Place a water-filled bottle or brick in your toilet tank to reduce the amount of water needed to fill it.
- Put food coloring in your toilet tank and watch to see if the coloring shows up in the toilet bowl before flushing. If so, replace the leaking flap.
- Check tub and sink faucets for drips and replace washers and “O-rings” as necessary.
- Turn off all water to your home and look at the readout dial on your water meter. If the dial moves, you have a leak that needs repair.
- Check pipes coming into the house for leaks and have them repaired immediately. Don’t forget to check outside faucets and garden hoses.
- Turn off water while lathering, shampooing, shaving or brushing your teeth.
- Plug the bathtub before turning the water on, and then adjust the temperature as the tub fills up.
- Take showers instead of baths.
- Time your shower to keep it as short as possible.
- Collect the water from the bath/shower while waiting for it to heat up and use it to water plants.

In the Kitchen

- Run dishwashers and washing machines only with full loads to maximize efficiency.
- Avoid using sink disposals for food scraps. Composting food scraps is much more economical than using a garbage disposal.
- Avoid rinsing dishes before putting them in the dishwasher or use a pan of water in the sink and re-use the water as long as possible.
- When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.
- When washing dishes by hand, use the least amount of detergent as possible. This will minimize the amount of rinse water needed.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap for cold drinks.
- Avoid defrosting frozen foods with running water. Either plan ahead by placing frozen items in the refrigerator overnight or defrost them in the microwave.
- Avoid letting the faucet run while cleaning vegetables. Rinse them in a filled pan of water.

Outdoors

- Locate your main water shut-off valve and the water meter in your yard.
- Use dry cleanup methods to reduce both indoor and outdoor water use.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway or sidewalk.
- Set your lawn mower blades one notch higher. Longer grass means less evaporation.
- Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants. Chunks of bark, peat moss, gravel or mulch slow down evaporation.
- Catch rainwater from your gutters with a rain barrel and use it to water your flowers and vegetables.
- Catch natural water with a rain barrel for car washing or use a commercial carwash that recycles its wash water.

If each person does his part to conserve water, water waste is reduced and this precious natural resource can be protected. Conservation is especially important during times of drought. Do your part to help conserve water.

For more information call the Guilford County Department of Public Health at 641-7777, the NC Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance at (800) 763-0136 or visit our website at www.guilfordhealth.org