

Conservation

The source of this information is the Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense Site where you can find additional information on water conservation, products and services.

Why Water Efficiency?

Across the country, our growing population is putting stress on available water supplies. Between 1950 and 2000, the U.S. population nearly doubled. However, in that same period, public demand for water more than tripled! Americans now use an average of 100 gallons of water each day—enough to fill 1,600 drinking glasses! This increased demand has put additional stress on water supplies and distribution systems, threatening both human health and the environment.

There's a reason that water has become a national priority. A recent government survey showed at least 36 states are anticipating local, regional, or statewide water shortages by 2013. But by using water more efficiently, we can help preserve water supplies for future generations, save money, and protect the environment. WaterSense is making it easier to identify water-efficient products and practices.

Remember: Every drop counts!

Benefits of Water Efficiency

Save Water, Save Money

The average household spends as much as \$500 per year on its water and sewer bill. By making just a few simple changes to use water more efficiently, you could save about \$170 per year. If all U.S. households installed water-efficient appliances, the country would save more than 3 trillion gallons of water and more than \$18 billion dollars per year! Also, when we use water more efficiently, we reduce the need for costly water supply infrastructure investments and new wastewater treatment facilities.

Save Water, Save Energy

It takes a considerable amount of energy to deliver and treat the water you use everyday. American public water supply and treatment facilities consume about 56 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year—enough electricity to power more than 5 million homes for an entire year. For example, letting your faucet run for five minutes uses about as much energy as letting a 60-watt light bulb run for 14 hours.

By reducing household water use you can not only help reduce the energy required to supply and treat public water supplies but also can help address climate change. In fact:

- If one out of every 100 American homes retrofitted with water-efficient fixtures, we could save about 100 million kWh of electricity per year—avoiding 80,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions. That is equivalent to removing nearly 15,000 automobiles from the road for one year!
- If 1 percent of American homes replaced their older, inefficient toilets with WaterSense labeled models, the country would save more than 38 million kWh of electricity—enough to supply more than 43,000 households electricity for one month.

Depleting reservoirs and groundwater aquifers can put water supplies, human health, and the environment at serious risk. Lower water levels can lead to higher concentrations of natural contaminants, such as radon and arsenic, or human pollutants, such as agricultural and chemical wastes. Using water more efficiently helps maintain supplies at safe levels, protecting human health and the environment.

What Are the Environmental Benefits of Water Efficiency?

Water efficiency, together with reducing pollutants such as pesticides, can be an effective way to reduce pollution caused by excessive watering and water use. Some of the environmental benefits that are aided by water efficiency include:

- Fewer sewage system failures caused from excess water overwhelming the system.
- Healthy, rather than depleted and dried up, natural pollution filters such as downstream wetlands.
- Reduced water contamination caused by polluted runoff due to overirrigating agricultural and urban lands.

- Reduced need to construct additional dams and reservoirs or otherwise regulate the natural flow of streams, thus preserving their free flow and retaining the value of stream and river systems as wildlife habitats and recreational areas.
- Reduced need to construct additional water and wastewater treatment facilities.
- Elimination of excessive surface water withdrawals that degrade habitat both in streams and on land adjacent to streams and lakes.

Efficient water use can also reduce the amount of energy needed to treat wastewater, resulting in less energy demand and, therefore, fewer harmful byproducts from power plants.

- Most people realize that hot water uses up energy, but supplying and treating cold water requires a significant amount of energy too. American public water supply and treatment facilities consume about 56 billion kilowatt-hours per year—enough electricity to power more than 5 million homes for an entire year.
- If just 1 percent of American homes replaced an older toilet with a new WaterSense labeled toilet, the country would save more than 38 million kilowatt-hours of electricity—enough electricity to supply more than 43,000 households for one month.
- Letting your faucet run for five minutes uses about as much energy as letting a 60-watt light bulb run for 14 hours.

Want more information? See Use Your WaterSense !