

Maine Rural Water Association

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Water Conservation Tips Four Basic Steps to a Water Conservation Program

Step One: Economize!

- Look at your water habits developed over a lifetime. A lot of water goes down the drain because we have always thought of water as being plentiful and cheap. Become conscious of the amount of water you use, and look for ways to use less whenever you can.
- Turn the faucet off while brushing your teeth. Use a glass of water for rinsing your teeth.
- When shaving, use a sink filled with rinse water. Do not let the faucet flow.
- Take short showers instead of baths.
- Do not use the toilet as a trash can.
- Turn off the flow while soaping or shampooing.
- Refrigerate a bottle of drinking water instead of letting a faucet flow until the water is cold.
- Turn the faucet off while cleaning vegetables. Rinse them in the sink with the drain closed or in a pan of water.
- If you wash dishes by hand, do not leave the faucet flowing for rinsing. Instead, use a dish rack and spray device to rinse them. If you have two sinks, fill one with soapy water and one with rinse water.
- Fill the sink with water to pre-rinse dishes before putting them in the dishwasher
- Add your garbage to the trash instead of putting it down the garbage disposal. Disposals use a great deal of water and add unnecessary solids to the sewer or septic system. This also may be a good time to start *composting!*
- Instead of using water to defrost foods, defrost foods in the refrigerator overnight or use a microwave.
- The most important thing to do: Think as you use water!

Step Two: Repair Leaks!

- A leak of just one drop per second wastes 2,400 gallons of water a year. Leaks are one of the great enemies of a water conservation program and they can't be taken lightly.
- Repair leaking faucets and toilets (a leaking toilet can waste 200 gallons a day). To check for a leaky toilet, put a little food coloring in the toilet tank. If, without flushing, the color appears in the bowl, you have a leak.

Step Three: Install Water Saving Devices!

- Since passage of the Federal Energy Act in January 1994, all new manufactured toilets use 1.6 gallons per flush. If your present toilet was manufactured before 1994, consider placing a plastic gallon container in the tank toilet to save water with each flush.
- Install low flow showerheads that use no more than 2.5 gallons per minute at maximum flow.

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- Install low flow faucets that use no more than 2.2 gallons per minute at maximum flow. If installing low flow faucets is not practical, install faucet aerators and flow restrictors on all faucets.
- Replace the more common, less efficient, top loading clothes washer with a high efficiency, front loading washer which uses about 30 percent less water and 40 to 50 percent less energy

Step Four: Reuse Water!

- Unused or slightly used water is often suitable for other purposes, even with no treatment or filtration. During a severe drought, reusing water may become a necessity. When maximum conservation is called for, make the most of any water before you let it go down the drain!.
- Keep an empty container near sinks. Put it under the faucet while waiting for water to warm up. Pour any leftover water from cooking or drinking into it. Once full, use the water for gardening.
- Place a bucket in the shower to catch water, while waiting for the shower water to warm up.
- Take dirty water from birdbaths, flower vases or pet dishes and reuse on potted plants.
- When it rains, leave buckets outside to collect water for washing cars and watering plants and gardens.
- Turn off ice-makers for refrigerators and use trays instead.
- Position downspouts, with extensions if needed, so rain water runs onto the lawn or into the garden, not down the walk or driveway.
- If a dehumidifier exists, use the water it collects to water plants and gardens

Additional Tips: WINTER WATER CONSERVATION TIPS!

- Winterize outdoor spigots to avoid pipes bursting from freezing.
- Put skirting up around mobile homes or houses on pilings. Insulate and heat tape raiser pipe into mobile home or house.
- Insulate hot water pipes to reduce the amount of water which must be run to get hot water to the faucet
- Locate the master water shut off valve in your home, and mark it for quick identification. If a water pipe were to burst, it could cause flooding and property damage, not to mention immense water waste.

Additional Tips: SUMMER WATER CONSERVATION TIPS!

- Water lawn and garden early in the morning
- Keep your garden weed-free, since weeds use available water in the soil
- Do not water lawn and garden on windy days
- Wash cars with a pail of soapy water.
- Use a hose with a trigger nozzle to rinse.
- Wash cars on the grass. This will water the lawn at the same time.
- Cover an outdoor pool when not in use. Clean the pool filter regularly. Do not discharge pool water to streams or storm sewers. Spread filter backwash and pool water on grassy areas.
- Use a broom to sweep driveways and sidewalks rather than washing them down with a hose.

Call Maine Rural Water Association, The Maine Drinking Water Program or go to Maine Emergency Management Agency's web page, <http://www.state.me.us/mema/drought/index.htm>, for more suggestions and information.