

## Behavioural Practices for Water Conservation

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In addition to saving money on our utility bill, water conservation helps prevent water pollution in nearby lakes, rivers and local watersheds. Behavioural practices for conserving water involve changing water-use habits so that water is used more efficiently, thus reducing the overall water consumption in a home. These practices require a change in behaviour, not modifications in the existing plumbing or fixtures in a home. Behavioural practices for residential water users can be applied both indoors in the kitchen, bathroom, and laundry room and outdoors.

In the kitchen, for example, 10 to 20 gallons of water a day can be saved by running the dishwasher only when it is full. If dishes are washed by hand, water can be saved by filling the sink or a dish-pan with water rather than running the water continuously. Water can be saved in the bathroom by turning off the faucet while brushing teeth or shaving. Water can be saved by taking short showers rather than long showers or baths and turning the water off while soaping. These water savings can be increased even further by installing low-flow shower-heads. Toilets should be used only to carry away sanitary waste. Water can be saved in the laundry room by adjusting water levels in the washing machine to match the size of the load. If the washing machine does not have a variable load control, water can be saved by running the machine only when it is full. If washing is done by hand, the water should not be left running. A laundry tub should be filled with water, and the wash and rinse water should be reused as much as possible.

Outdoor water use can be reduced by watering the lawn early in the morning or late in the evening and on cooler days, when possible, to reduce evaporation. Allowing the grass to grow slightly taller will reduce water loss by providing more ground shade for the roots and by promoting water retention in the soil. Growing plants that are suited to the area ("indigenous" plants) can save more than 50 percent of the water normally used to care for outdoor plants. As much as 150 gallons of water can be saved when washing a car by turning the hose off between rinses. The car should be washed on the lawn if possible to reduce runoff. Additional savings of water can result from sweeping footpaths and driveways instead of hosing them down. Washing a footpath or driveway with a hose uses about 50 gallons of water every 5 minutes, if a home has an outdoor pool, water can be saved by covering the pool when it is not in use.

Water conservation comes naturally when everyone in the family is aware of its importance and parents take the time to teach children some of the simple water-saving methods around the home which can make a big difference.

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