



City of Portsmouth Water and Sewer Division

Water Efficiency Tips

Inspect Your Home for Water-Wasting Leaks

Dripping faucets and leaking pipes can have an adverse effect on your water bill. Steady drips and small leaks can waste as much as 50 to 100 gallons of water per day. Conducting periodic leak inspections can help you save money and water, and in some cases avoid possible water damage to your home. Inspecting for leaks is not difficult and takes very little time.

Steps:

1. Locate and check your water meter. Write down the meter reading, wait as long as possible (at least a few hours) before using any water. Look at the meter reading again and see if there is a difference in the readings. Any change in the readings indicates unwanted water usage.
2. Check your toilets. Place about 10 drops of food coloring into your toilet tank. Wait 15-20 minutes without flushing the toilet. Look into the toilet bowl. Any color in your bowl indicates that your toilet is leaking.
3. Inspect valves and other plumbing fixtures. Verify that none of the numerous valves that exist in your system leak or drip. Check for leaks and drips in any fixture or device in your home that uses water.

Every spring, plan to inspect irrigation systems, swimming pools and other areas on the exterior of your home as temperatures warm and outdoor activities increase.

KITCHEN WATER SAVING TIPS

1. Run dishwashers and washing machines with full loads only.
2. Scrape your plates instead of rinsing before loading them into the dishwasher.
3. When washing dishes by hand, fill the sink with soap and water instead of running the tap. Fill another basin with clean water for rinsing.
4. Keep a container of drinking water in the refrigerator, instead of running the tap until the water is cool.
5. Don't let the faucet run while cleaning vegetables. Instead, rinse them in a sink or bowl filled with clean water.
6. Thaw frozen foods ahead of time in sitting water or in the air rather than under running water.
7. Add food wastes to your compost pile instead of using the garbage disposal.

BATHROOM

1. Install low flow showerheads and faucet aerators (2.5 gallons per minute or lower). Many older showerheads have flow rates of five gallons per minute or more. A 10 minute shower at this rate uses 50 gallons of water!
2. Limit shower time to five minutes.
3. Keep tub bathing to a minimum, and instead, take quick showers.
4. Do not leave the water running while brushing your teeth or shaving. For a family of 4 this will save you some 200 gallons a week.
5. Install a High Efficiency Toilet (HET), or use a toilet displacement device such as a water-filled half-gallon container in your existing one (but do not use a brick, as it can disintegrate and cause plumbing problems).
6. Do not use the toilet as a waste basket or ashtray.
7. Leaking toilets throughout the U.S. waste on average 9.5 gallons per day. Audible leaks can waste hundreds of gallons each day. Many things can cause a toilet leak such as a worn or broken flapper valves, ballcocks, refill valves and valve seals.

OUTDOOR WATER SAVING TIPS

1. Use a broom to clear debris from walkways and driveways instead of hosing them down with water.
2. Water your lawn only when it needs it. One inch of water per week is sufficient to keep your lawn and plants healthy.
3. Make sure that sprinklers are watering only the landscape, not the driveway, sidewalk, or street. Do not water on windy days. If you see water running off of your landscape into the street or sidewalk this may mean that your sprinklers are not properly aligned, that you are applying too much water too quickly, or that your soil is already saturated with water.
4. Plant drought tolerant and/or native trees and plants. Use mulch to help retain moisture. To learn more about reducing the amount of water your lawn and garden needs and about the practice of xeriscaping or planting drought tolerant species.
5. When washing a car, use soap and water from a bucket. Use a hose with a shut-off nozzle for the final rinse only.