

Water conservation saves water, energy and money

The average Floridian uses 175 gallons of water each day—about 65 more gallons per day than the average American.

What do you do with your 65 additional gallons? Do you drink more, do more laundry, wash your car more, water your lawn more? The answer is likely “all of the above” plus a myriad of other reasons related to our warm climate. Here’s the irony: Survey shows that 80 percent of our customers believe water conservation is critical, yet they continue to use nearly three gallons of water per hour more than the average American.

For several years, Florida’s rainfall has been below normal. Lack of rain has caused record low levels in our underground drinking water supply. The average adult needs only 2.5 quarts of water a day to maintain health, but each person in Florida uses about 120 to 150 gallons of water a day. And, with thousands of people moving to our state each month, future demand on fresh water supplies will continue to increase. That’s why it’s important to use water wisely (whether there’s a drought or not) in our homes, schools and businesses. By conserving water today, we can do our part to keep water pure and plentiful for future generations. By following a few simple steps, a typical family can save 50,000 to 100,000 gallons of water each year.

You can score big by following this water-saving game plan:

- **Stuff It.** In the wastebasket, that is. Toss tissues, insects or anything else you want to get rid of in the trash, not in the toilet. (each time you flush, that’s 5–7 gallons down the drain.)
- **Limit your dribbling.** Check for leaks or drips in faucets and toilets. Don’t leave the water running while you brush your teeth or wash the dishes. When washing the car, watering your lawn, or even bathing your dog, use a hose with a nozzle that automatically shuts off.
- **Make a clean sweep.** Use a broom, not a hose, to clean your driveway or sidewalk.
- **Be a team player.** When helping with chores around the house, remember to water lawns and gardens during cool times of the day—early morning or evening. When doing dishes or washing clothes, use only full loads in automatic machines. Use one dishpan for washing and one for rinsing when doing dishes by hand.
- **Blow the whistle...on water wasters.** Remind your friends and family to conserve.
- **Take water breaks, but don’t let the tap water run to get cool.** Instead, keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator.
- **Don’t linger in the locker room.** Take shorter showers or fill you bathtub only partly full.
- **Play by the rules.** Abide by any watering rules or restrictions that may be in effect in your community.
- **Upgrade your house.** Retrofit toilets with low-flow water saving devices, which can save you 150 or more gallons a month. Replacing shower heads with low-flow alternatives and combined with shorter showers can save you up to 2,600 gallons a month.
- **Fill it Up.** Maximize appliance efficiency by making sure that dishwashers and washing machines are fully loaded. This can save you 15–55 gallons per load.

Lawn watering accounts for a whopping 50% of all home water use!

Keeping your lawn irrigation in proper working order is a vital part of water conservation. When irrigation systems malfunction or develop leaks, it both wastes water and costs money. Below are some examples of common irrigation solutions...

- **Watch your watering time.** After a half-hour of lawn watering with the average sprinkler system, lawns become saturated and further watering only becomes wasteful runoff. It’s also best to water before 9 a.m. or after 6 p.m. Otherwise, as much as 30 percent of the water is lost to evaporation by the midday sun.
- **Evaluate your irrigation system.** Outdoor irrigation can account for more than 50 percent of a home’s total water consumption. Drip irrigation that uses a network of pipes and hoses to provided a slow trickle of water to landscape root systems works best. Moisture sensing devices that shut off automatic sprinkler systems prevents over-watering.
- **Rake, sweep or blow driveways and sidewalks instead of hosing away debris.** You will save up to 50–60 gallons of water.
- **Build dykes** around trees and shrubs to hold water.
- **Xeriscape your yard** by using drought and salt tolerant plants which are native to Florida.