

# Low Cost Ways to Conserve Water in Your Home

## Reduce Water Use from Showers and Faucets

75% of indoor water consumption occurs in the bathroom. The average 6-minute shower uses 20 gallons of water! Reduce this amount with the following tips:

**No Cost:** Limit shower time to five minutes or less.

**Less than \$10:** Install an on/off valve between the shower arm and showerhead. This temporarily shuts off the flow while maintaining the temperature, and can be a useful water-saver while soaping up or shaving.

**\$10-\$50:** Install a low-flow (less than 2 gallons a minute) showerhead. Free showerheads are also available at the Utility Department.

**\$20-\$50:** Insulate all accessible hot-water pipes, especially those within 3 feet of the water heater. You'll get hot water faster, avoid wasting water while it heats up, and save energy in the process.



You can also reduce water consumption by fitting all household faucets with low-flow aerators (less than two gallons per minute). This is the best in-home water conservation method, and it's also the cheapest.

## Reduce Water Use from Toilets

Every day, the U.S. uses 5.8 billion gallons of fresh water to flush waste.

If you are planning to replace your toilet, check out options with either a very low (less than 1.6) gallon per flush (gpf) rating, or dual flush controls. Dual flush toilets can reduce water use by up to 67% compared with traditional toilets.

Rebates are available for very low flow toilets through the City of Rohnert Park. The application and list of qualifying toilets are available online and at City Hall.



If you don't plan on replacing your toilet, try these quick fixes:

**Check for leaks:** Put a dye tablet (available at the Utility Department) or a little food coloring in your toilet tank. If the color begins to appear in the bowl within 30 minutes, you have a leak that should be repaired. Most replacement parts are inexpensive and easy to install.

**Displace water:** Most older toilets don't require nearly as much water as they use (3.5-5 gallons) to flush properly. To "trick" your toilet into using less water, place a half-gallon plastic bottle inside your toilet tank to displace water volume. (Be sure at least 2.5 gallons of water remain in the tank so it will flush properly.) Ideally, weigh down the bottle with sand or pebbles so it doesn't interfere with the tank mechanisms. This simple retrofit would save a three-person family 225 gallons of water per month!

## Minimize Appliance Water Consumption

Outside the bathroom, most water is used to wash clothes and dishes. Here are some tips to reduce water consumption in these areas:

**Fully loaded:** Dishwashers and clothes washers should be operated when full for optimum water conservation. If you must wash partial loads, adjust the water levels as appropriate.

**The dishwasher is your friend!** Even older dishwashers don't use as much water per dish as hand-washing. Newer, more efficient dish washers use only 1/6 of the water used during hand washing and save 230 hours of your time each year.

**Scrape, don't rinse:** Pre-rinsing dishes before loading the dishwasher is unnecessary. Scrape off food, and then trust the dishwasher to do its job.

**Pass on permanent press:** Avoid the permanent press cycle when washing clothes, which uses an additional five gallons for an extra rinse.

**Upgrade your equipment:** Consider buying a water-saving front-loading clothes washer, or a top-loading one with no central agitator. Check ENERGY STAR for ideas and ratings. The City of Rohnert Park also offer rebates on water-saving and energy-saving models. The application and list of qualifying washers are available online and at City Hall.

