



Indoors

Free and Easy Ideas

Toilets

- Toilets use 27% of U.S. average indoor household water. Don't use toilets as waste baskets or ash trays.
- Clothes washers consume 22% of indoor water. Wash only full loads of laundry. Every time you run a washer you use 20 to 40 gallons, depending on the model.
- Teach children to change into play clothes after school so that school clothes can be worn more than once before washing.

Showers

- Showers use 17% of indoor water. Take shorter showers, five minutes or less.
- Turn shower water off except to wet before soaping, then again for rinsing.
- Keep the rate of flow down when you shower.
- Cut down on bathtub use or fill the tub to a lower level.
- Capture the initial cold water in a bucket to water potted plants. Turn it all the way to hot until you get the temperature you want to decrease the wait.

Faucets

- Faucets use 16% of indoor water. Only run water when actually using it.
- Turning off the tap while brushing your teeth or shaving can save more than 200 gallons of water per month.
- Rinse your razor in a partially filled sink instead of running the water.
- Teach children to turn water faucets off quickly and tightly after each use.
- Don't leave the faucet running while you rinse or wash dishes.
- Keep a water bottle in the refrigerator instead of running tap water until cold.
- Scrape food from dishes first then rinse only as much as needed. Rinsing in a second sink or tub uses less water than rinsing under a faucet.
- Limit use of the garbage disposal. Save food scraps to run the garbage disposal only once, or save more water by composting.

Water Conservation Checklist

- Operate the dishwasher only when it is fully loaded. Every time you run your dishwasher you use between about 9 and 25 gallons depending on the model.
- Capture and use otherwise wasted water (waiting for water to warm or cool, vegetable or dish water). Soapy water is generally OK for watering plants as long as there is no bleach or borax.

A bit of effort and expense

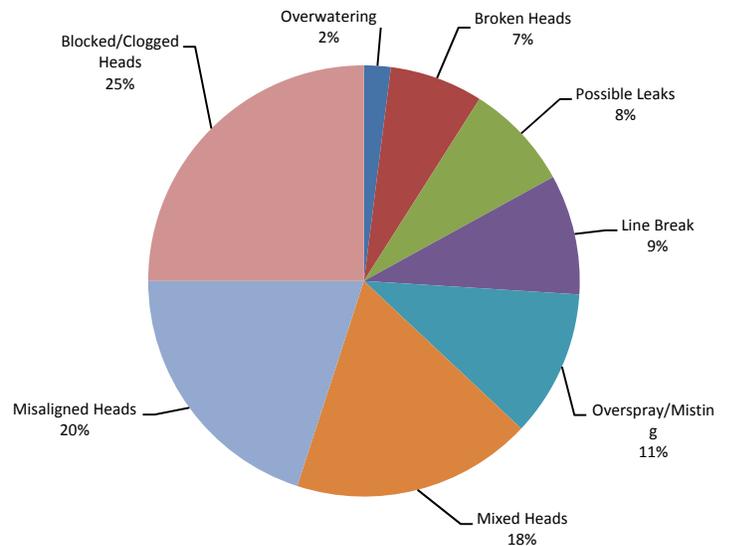
- Leaks consume 14% of U.S. average indoor water use. Check/repair toilet leaks, which can waste as much as 200 gallons a day. Put food coloring in the tank and wait. If color shows in the bowl you have a leak. Adjust or replace the flapper. If you hear the toilet running but color didn't appear in the bowl, adjust the float arm to below the overflow line. Otherwise, call a plumber.
- Check/Repair faucet and pipe leaks. You can check your entire system by turning everything off and seeing if the water meter still shows flow.
- Install low-flow shower heads and faucet flow restrictors (aerators). You can purchase quality, low-flow fixtures for around \$10 to \$20 apiece and achieve water savings of 25%–60%.
- Replace older 4-6 gallon per flush toilets or even 1.6 gpf versions with 1.28 gallon per flush High Efficiency Toilets.
- Install a circulating hot water system with a timer.
- Replace traditional clothes washers using 27-54 gallons per load with new, energy- and water-conserving high-efficiency washing machines that use less than 27 gallons per load.
- Insulate hot water pipes. Running the "hot" line to clear cool water is wasteful.

***Spending now may
save money in the
long run***

Outdoors

- Water your lawn only when needed, 2-3 days a week at most. If you step on your lawn and the grass springs back, it does not need to be watered.
- Water early in the morning when temperatures and winds at their lowest levels to reduce evaporation. The Ventura River Board instituted a prohibition for landscape watering between 9AM and 6PM beginning August 12, 2009.
- Turn off your sprinklers when it rains. Rain sensors and shutoff switches are inexpensive and can be retrofitted to almost any system.
- See the indoor water conservation checklist for ways to capture otherwise wasted water to use for watering potted plants.
- Don't water the gutter. Runoff is wasteful and can carry pollutants to creeks.
- VRCWD studies found that 69% of district water is used for irrigation and that irrigation inefficiencies accounted for more runoff than overwatering. See the chart and check your irrigation monthly for:
 - Spray heads blocked by plant growth or clogged with debris
 - Poorly aimed nozzles/misaligned and tilted heads/incorrect arc (adjust at head)
 - Mixed heads (each station should only have one kind of head)
 - Overspray (adjust flow through the valve, use different nozzles, or adjust the flow control screw on the nozzle itself)
 - Broken heads (water leaks from the seal around the pop-up stem), broken parts (some expense)
- Other things to check for: heads that weep even when off (a faulty valve or the lack of check valves), sunken heads in a lawn (may need taller risers or turf may need dethatching – some expense)
- Reset your irrigation timers four times a year as the seasons change. VRCWD customers tend to overwater each fall by 25% or more because they don't readjust at the end of September when solar radiation is already halfway to winter lows.
- Use trigger nozzle on hoses so water won't run except when you intend it to.
- Teach your children that hoses and sprinklers are not toys. Restrict or eliminate use of hose-end water toys.
- Use a broom to clean driveways and other landscape. The Ventura River Board discourages hosing down hardscape, except where a public health or safety issue exists.
- Schedule each individual zone in your irrigation system to account for the type of plant material sprinkler, sun exposure, and soil type for the specific area.

- Remove dying plants and weeds that compete for available water.
- Maintain sharp blades on pruning shears and lawn mowers to reduce plant water loss.
- Aerate lawns and top-dress with compost periodically to decrease compaction and improve penetration of water, air and nutrients into root zone. You can tell your lawn needs aeration when water puddles or runs off after only a few minutes of watering.
- Avoid installing water features. Even recycled water evaporates.



Inexperience or moderate effort

- Mulch flower garden areas as well as tree and shrub bases.
- Avoid planting turf or installing spray irrigation in areas that are difficult to water without runoff such as in isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways and on slopes.
- At least once a year, confirm that all irrigation systems are distributing water uniformly and inspect, repair and/or adjust subsurface or drip watering systems.
- Immediately shut off irrigation system(s) and adjust whenever irrigation water falls or runs onto hard surfaces such as sidewalks, streets or driveways.
- Repair all water leaks as soon as detected, including hose couplings.
- When buying plants, select those that have low water requirements.