

Topic: Conservation

Water conservation is an important issue for association's— not only do they want to be environmentally responsible but also want to keep assessments as low as possible. Here's how you can help:

Kitchen Aid

Large appliances—washing machines and dishwashers—consume the most water, so they are important places to start any water-conservation efforts.

- Set the water level on your washing machine to match the size of your load. Try to avoid doing frequent small loads; whenever possible, run the machine only when you have a full load.
- You don't need to rinse dishes before putting them in the dishwasher! No, really. Hand rinsing dishes under the faucet uses 15-18 gallons of water per load. If your dishwasher has a pre-rinse cycle, try using it instead of hand rinsing. If a dish or two isn't completely clean after the dishwasher cycle, finish the job by hand.
- Like the washing machine, only run the dishwasher when it's full. If you have only a few dishes, wash them by hand in a sink or basin—not under a running faucet. Use a second basin or dishpan for rinsing, or spray rinse all the soapy dishes at once.

Splish-Splash—Conserving in the Bath

After these major appliances, the bathroom offers the next biggest opportunity to save water.

- Make sure your toilets are all working efficiently. According to the American Water Works Association, the average American home loses 14 percent of all water used to leaks. (And, remember, the toilet is not a waste basket.)
- Keep your showers as brief as possible or turn the water off while shaving or scrubbing in the stall. Consider installing water-saver showerheads and faucets.
- When taking a bath, close the drain while the water warms up then adjust the temperature. Monitor the tub as it fills, and turn the water off at the half-way mark.

Running Hot and Cold

- There's nothing as refreshing as a cold drink of water, but don't let the faucet run to get it. Chill a container of water in the refrigerator instead.
- Avoid running hot tap water over frozen food to defrost it; put it in the refrigerator the night before.
- Rethink any tasks you usually perform under running water—like washing vegetables or brushing your teeth. (A gallon of water a minute flows through a tap that's only half open.). Use a dishpan or bowl of water instead of letting the tap run. Then pour the water from the bowl on your house plants.

“Used” Water

Before pouring that half-filled glass of water down the sink, ask yourself where it could be put to good use? How about pouring it in the dog’s bowl? And the condensate from the dehumidifier is suitable for watering plants. Other sources of “used” water are suitable for reuse—it just takes a little imagination and a change in routine.

Water conservation begins with each of us. If each resident makes a few simple adjustments in household routine, the association can conserve thousands of gallons of water and save thousands of dollars each year.