Water
—Every drop counts
Water is a limited resource!
That's why it's so important to use water wisely.

Water is a big part of our everyday lives.
We use water:
- at home—for drinking, bathing, cooking and cleaning
- at work—for example, to help manufacture goods and to provide power, heating and cooling
- at play—for swimming, fishing, boating and gardening.

There are many benefits to using water wisely.
When you save water, you also:
- save money
- save energy
- help protect the environment.

There are 3 basic ways to use less water.

1. Change your habits.
A lot of water goes down the drain needlessly. Think about the amount of water you're using and how you can use less.

2. Repair leaks.
A single dripping faucet can waste hundreds, even thousands of gallons per year. Most leaks are easy to find and repair.

3. Install watersaving devices.
If you don't already have water-efficient or low-flow fixtures, you can cut your water use with:
- aerators (to mix air with water)
- displacement devices (to reduce the amount of water used in older toilets).

Some areas allow water reuse.
Used water may be suitable for some purposes. Be sure to comply with local laws and regulations regarding water reuse.
Wise water use begins at home.

In the bathroom:

**Toilet**
- Flush only when necessary. Don't use the toilet to dispose of cigarette butts or other trash.
- Repair leaks. Add food coloring to the toilet tank water, and check the bowl in 15 minutes. (Don't flush.) Color in the toilet bowl probably means there's a leak.

**Sink**
- Plug the drain and use only as much water as you need to wash or shave.
- Don't let water run when you brush your teeth.
- Repair leaks and drips.

**Tub or shower**
Plug the drain before you run water for baths. Take shallow baths and keep showers short.

Water-saving devices are available for the toilet and the shower.

In the kitchen:

**Sink**
- Check faucets and pipes for leaks.
- Replace washers, and repair or replace fixtures if necessary.
- Install an aerator or flow restrictor in the faucet.

**Dish washing**
- Scrape dishes, but don't prerinse.
- Soak pots and pans before washing.
- Don't keep the water running. Plug the wash and rinse basins. Use only as much water and detergent as you need.
- Run the dishwasher only when it's full, avoid extra cycles and select no-heat drying.
- Inspect all connections to the dishwasher, and repair any leaks.

When doing laundry:
- Use the load selector. Match the water level to the load size, or do only full loads.
- Presoak heavily soiled items.
- Use only as much detergent as needed.
- Check faucets and hose connections for leaks.

When buying a new dishwasher or clothes washer, choose a water- and energy-saving model.
Use these water-saving tips outdoors.

**Car washing**
Rinse your car once, then wash from a bucket of soapy water. Rinse quickly again.

**Hoses and irrigation systems**
- Use a hose nozzle that can be shut off. To avoid leaks, shut off water at the house when finished.
- Consider a drip irrigation system. This type of system slowly waters at the roots to help reduce evaporation.
- Keep irrigation systems running efficiently. Install shut-off devices like rain or soil-moisture sensors. Repair, replace or adjust sprinkler heads. Check often for leaks.

**Pool**
- Don’t overfill. This helps reduce splashing and spilling. Use a cover to slow evaporation.
- Check the pool and filtration system for leaks. Have leaks repaired.

**Lawn and garden**
- Water when the sun is down—early in the morning or late at night—and it’s not windy. Water slowly and as little as possible.
- Let grass grow taller in hot weather. Use mulch in the garden and around shrubs to save moisture.
- Plant native plants and shrubs that don’t need a lot of water. Consider alternatives to big, thirsty lawns.
- Obey any watering restrictions in your community.

Check your water system for leaks.
Here’s how to tell if you have a leak and how much water you’re losing:

1. **Find your water meter.**
   It may be in the basement or wherever the water line enters your home. (Some meters are not accessible to homeowners. Check with water officials if you can’t find your meter.)

2. **Read the meter twice.**
   Read it first at night, after the day’s water use has ended—and again in the morning, before any water is used.

3. **Find the difference.**
   Subtract the first from the second reading to tell how much (if any) water leaked out overnight.

4. **Look for leaks.**
   Find them by checking pipes, hoses and connections. Have leaks repaired quickly.

Check with your local water department for information about water-saving programs.

If everyone saves a little, together we’ll save a lot!