

# every drop counts: CONSERVE WATER AT HOME

The average person uses 60 gallons of water a day and wastes more than 9 gallons a day through household leaks. Georgians have experienced first-hand the importance of conserving water, always a truly precious and limited resource and much more so during drought conditions. You can easily begin conserving water, energy and money by following these tips.

## Wash laundry and dishes only when there is a full load.

You can save 300 to 800 gallons of water a month by washing laundry and dishes only when the machine is full. For small loads of laundry, adjust the water setting to a lower level. If you only have a few dishes wash them in the sink or a dish pan and rinse in a pan of hot water or use a sprayer. Washing dishes one at a time can waste hundreds of gallons of water a month. Remember, dishwashers are designed to clean dirty dishes, so there is no need to pre-rinse. Appliance manufacturers recommend scraping dishes prior to washing them and not pre-rinsing.

## Always turn off running water

You can decrease your water use by several gallons by simply turning the water off when you are brushing your teeth or shaving. Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the refrigerator instead of running the water until it gets cold enough to drink. Plan your meals ahead of time so you can defrost food in the refrigerator instead of under running water. As you wait for the water in the shower or sink to reach the correct temperature, collect it in a bucket and use it to water plants or mop the floor. Start a compost pile with food waste and stop using the garbage disposal.

## Take shorter showers

A 10 minute shower with an older showerhead can use up to 80 gallons of water. Time your shower and try reducing it to 5 minutes. You can reduce water use in the shower by turning the water off while you lather up and shampoo. To maintain a consistent temperature, install a toggle switch on your shower to cut the water flow. If you take a bath, a full bathtub can use 30 to 50 gallons of water. Save water by filling the tub only  $\frac{1}{3}$  full or no more than 5" of water.

## Eliminate any and all leaks

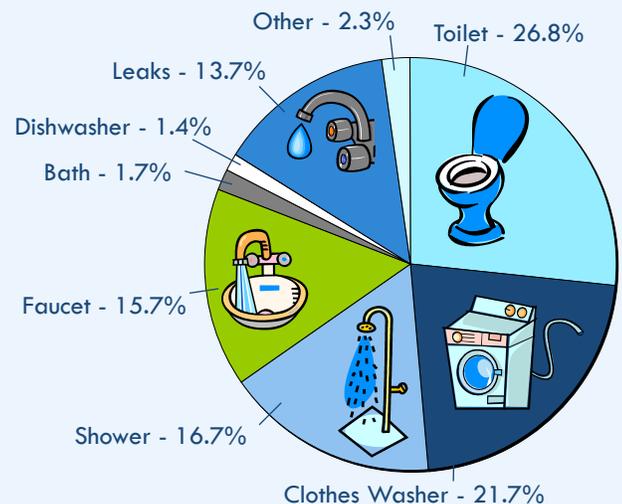
A faucet dripping one drop of water per second wastes nearly 9 gallons of water a day. You can stop dripping faucets by turning them off completely, but not so tightly that you damage the valve seats. If its still dripping repair it. To check for toilet leaks, remove the toilet tank cover and put in 5 to 10 drops of food coloring. Wait 30 minutes. If any of the coloring leaks into the toilet bowl then you have a leak and you should fix it immediately. A leaking toilet wastes 15 gallons of water a day. Repairing the leaks in your home can cut your water consumption in half.

## Reduce the flow of toilets and showerheads

Close to half of the water used in a home is for toilets and showers. If your toilet was manufactured before 1993, it uses 3.5 to 8 gallons per flush (gpf). Newer high efficiency models use 1.5 gpf or less. A short-term conservation measure is to place a 2 liter bottle filled with pebbles or sand in the toilet tank. This displaces some of the water and saves about a half gallon per flush. Another way to save water is to reduce the number of flushes by not using the toilet as a trash can.

Showerheads manufactured before 1978 use 3 to 10 gallons per minute (gpm). Showerheads manufactured after 1978 use 2.5 gpm. If you are unsure of how much water your shower uses, you can check the flow rate. Hold a bucket under the showerhead and turn the water on full blast for 30 seconds. Measure the number of cups of water in the bucket and multiply by two to get the number of gallons per minute. If your showerhead uses more than 2.5 gpm you should consider replacing it with a low-flow showerhead that uses 1.5 to 2 gpm.

Indoor Household Water Use



# Saving Water

Device	Water Usage	Improved Efficiency
Toilet	3.5 to 8 gpf (pre-1993) 1.6 gpf (since 1993)	1.5 to 1.3 gpf with low-flow or high efficiency toilet
Shower	2.5 gpm x 10 minutes	5 minute shower saves 12.5 gallons of water 1.5 gpm showerhead saves 17.5 gallons of water for a 5 min. shower
Bathing (tub)	30 – 50 gallons in a full tub	Reduce water level to $\frac{1}{3}$ full
Faucet	2 to 3 gpm	Aerator reduces flow to 1.5 gpm or less
Clothes Washer	41 gpl	High efficiency Energy Star machine uses less than 28 gpl
Dishwasher	8 to 15 gpl	4 to 7 gpl for high efficiency Energy Star models
Dishwashing	20 gallons (tap running)	Fill the sink, then wash and rinse dishes (5 gallons)
Brushing teeth	5 gallons (tap running for 2 min.)	1 gallon or less (turn the water off while brushing)

gpf = gallons per flush    gpm = gallons per minute    gpl = gallons per load

## INFORMATIONAL SOURCES:

**Awwa Research Foundation** "Residential End Uses of Water" 1999

**American Water Works Association (AWWA)**  
www.drinktap.org

**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District**  
www.northgeorgiawater.com

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency WaterSense®**  
www.epa.gov/owm/water-efficiency/index.htm

**Energy Star**  
www.energystar.gov

**Conserve Water Georgia!**  
www.conservewatergeorgia.net

**Georgia WaterWise Council**  
www.gwwc.org

HACE-E-69 • January 2008

**Author:** Pamela R. Turner, Ph.D., Housing Specialist

**Reviewers:** Susan Varlamoff and Rose Mary Seymour, University of Georgia; Michael Vogel, Montana State University; Brian Skeens, CH2M Hill; Deron Davis, Georgia Environmental Protection Division

*This publication was produced as part of the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Water Conservation Banner Program.*

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating. The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension and the Colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences & Family and Consumer Sciences offer educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.

**An Equal Opportunity Employer/Affirmative Action Organization Committed to a Diverse Work Force**

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, The University of Georgia Colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and Family and Consumer Sciences and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

Dr. Scott Angle, Dean and Director

## Long-Term Actions to Save Water

- Insulate water pipes to get hot water faster and avoid wasting water while waiting for it to reach the correct temperature
- Install a low-flow or high efficiency toilet. If you flush six times a day, you will save 12 to 39 gallons of water a day, or as much as 14,235 gallons in a year! Look for the WaterSense label (www.epa.gov/watersense)
- Purchase a new water and energy efficient washing machine and dishwasher. Look for the Energy Star label (www.energystar.gov)

Before re-cycling water or using "gray water" from bathtubs, showers, sinks and washing machines, contact your local health department. Several communities do not allow the use of gray water.

## Remember...

# EVERY DROP COUNTS!

Water conservation should be a daily part of your life. A few simple actions can save hundreds of gallons of water each month and put money in your pocket!

For more information, contact your local  
Cooperative Extension office.

Call **1-800-ASK-UGA1**

or go to [www.gafamilies.com](http://www.gafamilies.com)



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**  
Colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences & Family and Consumer Sciences