

DROP BY DROP: CONSERVING WATER



Why should you conserve water?

Most of us seldom appreciate many of the things around us that are plentiful and easy to obtain. And what could be more plentiful than water? To get water all we do is just turn on the faucet 24 hours a day and it's there, ready to use. But think again – the water we use doesn't just magically appear. Treated water is a carefully manufactured product which appears in your home only after traveling through pipes and a treatment process. It's a valuable resource that shouldn't be wasted.

Just 1% of the entire water supply in the world is available for human use – the rest is salty or locked in ice caps and glaciers. Just this relatively small 1% keeps all the world's agricultural, manufacturing, community, personal household and sanitation needs operating. We actually drink very little of our processed "drinking water" - around 1%. The rest goes on lawns, in washing machines, and down toilets and drains!

As concern for our environment has increased in recent years, so have the federal and state demands on our local water and wastewater treatment processes. These mandates can greatly increase the costs of operating our water and wastewater systems – these costs must ultimately be paid for by the utility customers. In the face of rising water and sewer costs, conservation can be a way for citizens to do a favor to both the environment, and their pocketbooks. You, the customer, pay for every drop, whether it's used wisely or wasted.

A good water conservation program contains some simple, painless ways to reduce your water consumption without really altering your life. It is mostly a matter of using common sense and taking the time to think about water and how you use it.

Four Basic Components to a Water Conservation Program

Step One: Economize.

Look at your water habits developed over a lifetime. A lot of water goes down the drain because we have always thought of water as being plentiful and cheap. Typically, inside your house, bathroom facilities constitute nearly 75% of the water used. Become conscious of the amount of water you use, and look for ways to use less whenever you can. The most important thing to do: *Think* as you use water!

Step Two: Repair Leaks.

A leak of just one drop per second wastes 2,400 gallons of water a year. Just imagine if even one half of the homes in our town had one leaky faucet. This alone would add up to a flood of water wasted down the drain.

Step Three: Install Water Saving Devices.

There are many devices you can buy and install fairly easily to reduce your water consumption. These include faucet aerators, flow regulators for shower heads, and displacement devices for toilets.

Step Four: Reuse Water.

Unused or slightly used water is often suitable for other purposes, even with no treatment or filtration. For example, changed aquarium water makes an excellent nutrient rich water for your plants or flower garden. Try to make the most of any water before it goes down the drain.

**Keep watching for more conservation tips.
Brought to you by the City of Big Falls Water Department.**