

# The Drought – Making a Difference

Water is a critical part of California's way of life. Our economy, our environment and our day-to-day lifestyle need water to flourish. But our water is limited--especially this year. The lack of rain and snow mean that our water supply will be challenged to meet the state's needs.

Conservation will help us stretch the water that we do have.

California is suffering from a drought so we cannot afford to waste any water. The good news is there are lots of simple ways to reduce the amount of water that we use at home, both inside and outside. If we all work together, we can make a difference for California's future.

## Laundry Room

- Use the washing machine for full loads only to save water and energy
- Washing dark clothes in cold water saves water and energy, and helps your clothes retain their color.

## Bathroom

- Install low-flow shower heads.
- Install aerators on bathroom faucets.
- Install a high-efficiency toilet.
- Take short, five-minute showers.
- When running a bath, plug the bathtub before turning on the water and adjust the temperature as it fills.
- Turn water off when brushing teeth or shaving. Plug the sink instead of running the water to rinse your razor.
- Be sure to test your toilet for leaks at least once a year. Put food coloring in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the bowl without flushing, there's a leak.
- Turn off the water while washing your hair.
- When washing your hands, turn the water off while you lather.

## Kitchen

- Run the dishwasher only when full to save water and energy.
- Install a water- and energy-efficient dishwasher.
- Install aerators on the kitchen faucet to reduce flows to less than 1 gallon per minute.
- When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run. Fill one basin with wash water and the other with rinse water.
- Dishwashers typically use less water than washing dishes by hand.
- Soak pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.
- Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water from the tap.
- Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator.
- Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap.
- Cook food in as little water as possible. This also helps it retain more nutrients.
- Collect the water you use while rinsing fruit and vegetables. Use it to water house plants.

# Outdoors

Most Californians think that they use more water indoors than outdoors. Typically, the opposite is true. In some areas, 50% or more of the water we use daily goes on lawns and outdoor landscaping. There are lots of ways to save water at home but reducing the water you use outdoors can make the biggest difference of all. Here are a few easy ways to change the way you use water outside your home.

## Know the Basics

- Water early in the morning or later in the evening when temperatures are cooler.
- Check your sprinkler system frequently and adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk, or street.
- Choose a water-efficient irrigation system such as drip irrigation for your trees, shrubs, and flowers.
- Water deeply but less frequently to create healthier and stronger landscapes.
- Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants to reduce evaporation and keep the soil cool. Organic mulch also improves the soil and prevents weeds.
- Consider drought-resistant trees and plants.
- Use a broom to clean driveways, sidewalks, and patios

## Don't Overwater

- One easy way to cut down how much water you use outdoors is to learn how much water your landscaping actually needs in order to thrive. Overwatering is one of the most common mistakes people make.
- If you really want to be a sophisticated water user, invest in a weather-based irrigation controller—or a smart controller. These devices will automatically adjust the watering time and frequency based on soil moisture, rain, wind, and evaporation and transpiration rates.

For more information and additional water-saving tips, visit <https://saveourwater.com>

