



Helpful Tips to Conserve Water

Milwaukie's water system is unique compared to other cities. Milwaukie's water comes from a groundwater system pulled from the Troutdale Gravel Aquifer through seven operating wells located throughout the city.

Did you know groundwater systems are more protected against climate change compared to surface water? Surface water systems may face toxic algae blooms, agricultural contamination and runoff. They are also more vulnerable to warm temperatures and drought, while aquifers, in general, are more resilient.

Milwaukie is not currently under a conservation order. Next to air, water is the most important element for the preservation of life. Milwaukie has a strong history for caring for its water and how it is used. Water is a finite commodity which, if not managed properly, can result in shortages. Water conservation can go a long way to help alleviate these impending shortages, if everyone does their part.



1. Check toilets for leaks

Put a few drops of food coloring in the toilet tank. If, without flushing, the coloring begins to appear in the bowl, there is a leak that has the potential to waste more than 100 gallons of water a day.

2. Stop using the toilet as an ashtray or wastebasket

Each cigarette butt or tissue flushed away can use five to seven gallons of water.

3. Put a plastic bottle in your toilet tank

Put one to two inches of sand or pebbles in the bottom of a 1-liter bottle to weigh it down. Fill the rest of the bottle with water and put it in the toilet tank, safely away from the operating mechanism. On average, the bottle may save five or more gallons of water each day without harming the efficiency of the toilet. If the tank is large enough, two bottles may be placed inside.

4. Take shorter showers

A typical shower uses five to ten gallons of water per minute. Limit showers to the time it takes to soap up, wash down and rise off.

5. Install water-saving shower heads or flow restrictors

Hardware and plumbing supply stores stock inexpensive shower heads or flow restrictors that will cut shower flow to about three gallons per minute instead of five to ten. They are easy to install, and showers will still be cleansing and refreshing.

6. Take baths

A partially-filled tub uses less water than all but the shortest showers.



7. Turn off the water while brushing your teeth

Before brushing, wet the toothbrush and fill a small glass for rinsing.

8. Turn off the water while shaving

Fill the bottom of the sink with a few inches of water to rinse the razor.

9. Check faucets and pipes for leaks

Even a small drip can waste 50 or more gallons of water per day.

10. Use your automatic dishwasher for full loads only

The average dishwasher uses about nine to 15 gallons of water depending on the model. Energy Star models use four gallons per cycle. Models made before 1994 use 10 to 15 gallons per cycle.

11. Use your automatic washing machine only for full loads only

An automatic washer uses 20 to 25 gallons per cycle. Certified Energy Star machines use an average of 14 to 19 gallons per cycle. Older washers use 29 to 45 gallons per load. The most efficient washers use less than five gallons per cubic foot of capacity. The smaller the water factor rating, the more water efficient the washer.



12. Don't let the faucet run while you clean vegetables

Rinse vegetables in a bowl or sink full of clean water.

13. Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator

This puts a stop to the wasteful practice of running tap water to cool it for drinking.

14. When washing dishes by hand, don't leave the water running for rinsing

If two sinks are available, fill one with rinse water. If just one sink is available, first gather all the washed dishes onto a dish rack, then rinse them quickly with a spray device or a pan of water.

15. Check faucets and pipes for leaks

Leaks waste water 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but an inexpensive washer is usually enough to stop them.



16. Water your lawn only when it needs it

Watering on a regular schedule doesn't allow for cool spells or rainfall, which reduce the need for watering. If the grass is stepped on and it springs back up, it doesn't need water.

17. Deep soak your lawn

Water long enough for it to seep down to the roots where it is needed. A light sprinkling that sits on the surface will simply evaporate and be wasted.

18. Water during the cool parts of the day, in the morning or evening

Early morning is better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus.

19. Don't water the sidewalks or streets. They won't grow

Position sprinklers so the water lands only on the lawn or garden. Avoid watering on windy days when much of the water may be carried off to the street or sidewalk.

20. Plant drought-resistant trees and plants

Many beautiful trees and plants thrive without irrigation.

21. Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants

Mulch slows the evaporation of moisture.

22. Use a broom or leaf blower to clean driveways, sidewalks and steps

Using a hose to clean areas waste hundreds of gallons of water.

23. Don't run the hose while washing the car

Wash the car from a bucket of soapy water. Use a hose only to rinse it off.

24. Tell children not to play with the hose and sprinklers

Children love to play under a hose or sprinkler on a hot day. Unfortunately, this practice is extremely wasteful of precious water and should be discouraged.

25. Check for leaks in pipes, hoses faucets and couplings

Leaks outside the house are easily missed. They can even be more wasteful than inside water leaks, especially when they occur from the main water line.

MORE INFORMATION

Shawn Flye

Cross Connection Specialist

503.786.7637

6101 SE Johnson Creek Blvd, Milwaukie OR 97206

backflowcc@milwaukieoregon.gov