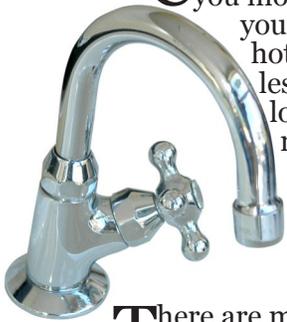


Water Conservation

Water is not an unlimited resource. Only 1% of the world's water supply is available for human use. The demand for water has increased over time. It is important to conserve, or save, water every day, not just during a dry period or drought.

Conserving water can also save you money and not just on your water bill. Using less hot water means using less energy which can lower your electric or natural gas bill. Using less water can also lower your sewer bill by putting less water down sewer drains.



There are many easy ways to save water. Here are several you can try:

- Consider buying water-efficient appliances and fixtures, such as low-flow toilets, faucet aerators, showerheads, dishwashers, and washing machines.
- Don't use your toilet as a trash can.
- To check for toilet leaks, add food coloring to the back tank. If there is a leak, food color will appear in the bowl within one hour.
- Repair dripping faucets and showerheads.
- Thaw foods in the refrigerator instead of using water.
- Wash fruits and vegetables in a bowl of water.
- Limit use of the garbage disposal.

- Make sure you have a full load before running the dishwasher or washing machine.
- Instead of running water down the drain, consider saving it for watering plants or cleaning.
- Raise your lawn mower blade to at least 3 inches. Taller grass holds soil moisture better.
- Use mulch around trees and plants.
- Water your lawn for long periods of time each week in the early morning instead of each day. Water will evaporate less and water pressure is usually higher.

How much water do you use?

Running the faucet.....2-5 gallons per minute
Taking a shower.....2-7 gal. per min.
Taking a bath.....20-60 gal. per bath
Washing a full load of clothes.....25-50 gal. per load
Flushing the toilet.....1.5-7 gal. per flush
Running an automatic dishwasher.....10-20 gal. per load
Running the garden hose.....5-10 gal. per min.

Do You Know How to Read Your Water Meter?

Use caution when removing the lid covering the meter to avoid damaging the meter and check for insects that may be nesting in the meter box.

The meter will have seven- or eight-digit numbers that show the total gallons used since the meter was installed. To figure out how much water you have used, choose a date to record the number on the meter. This is the first reading. At a later date, check the number again for a second reading. Use this formula to calculate the amount used: **Second reading - First reading = Gallons used.**

To check for a water leak, turn off all indoor and outdoor water-using devices - including less obvious ones such as water softeners and icemakers - before reading the meter. Wait 30 minutes and check the meter again. If the number is different, you have a water leak.



What You Should Know

Contamination: What is Cross Connection and How Does it Occur?

One of the major causes of contamination is cross connection. Cross connection is the actual or potential physical connection between a public water system or the consumer's water system and any source of unsafe liquid, solid, or gas that could contaminate the potable water supply by backflow.

For the drinking water supply to become contaminated, three things must happen at the same time:

1. The drinking water supply piping must be unprotected;
2. A physical cross connection between the drinking water supply and a contaminant source must be made; and
3. Backflow conditions, the reversal of the water's flow, must occur.

Resources

For more information visit these websites:

- **American Water Works Association:** www.awwa.org/waterwiser
- **Environmental Protection Agency:** www.epa.gov/watersense and www.epa.gov/safewater
- **S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control:** www.scdhec.net/environment/water/dwoutreach.htm
- **S.C. Department of Natural Resources:** www.dnr.sc.gov/climate/sco/Publications/our_water.php
- **Information on S. C. drinking water:** www.epa.gov/safewater/dwinfo/sc.htm#offices
- **www.wateruseitwisely.com**

Contact the ORS

The ORS regulates investor-owned water utilities. Visit our website for a list of regulated utilities. The Consumer Services Division of the Office of Regulatory Staff can be reached several ways:

Phone 803-737-5230 (Columbia, S.C.)
1-800-922-1531 (toll-free in S.C.)
803-737-5175 TTY (Columbia, S.C.)
1-800-334-2217 TTY (toll-free in S.C.)

Fax 803-737-4750

Web www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov

Hours 8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday
(closed state holidays)

About the ORS

The S.C. Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) was created in 2004 by the S.C. General Assembly.

The ORS represents the public interest of South Carolina in utility regulation with regard to rates, charges, service standards, facilities, and practices of the major utility industries - electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water/wastewater, and transportation - before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (PSC), the court system, the S.C. General Assembly, and federal regulatory bodies. The ORS has responsibility for oversight of railroad safety and natural gas pipeline safety in the state.

In fulfilling this mission, the ORS strives to balance the concerns of the using and consuming public, the financial integrity of public utilities, and the economic development of South Carolina.

How You Can Conserve Water...

...to help the environment and save money



Information for Consumers