



Public Works/Sewer-Water Department

DAVE WEAKLEY
Commissioner

January 2013

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Re: Ideas for Using Water Efficiently

Efficient water use can have major environmental, public health, and economic benefits by helping to improve water quality, maintain aquatic ecosystems, and protect drinking water resources.

Efficient use of water, if practiced broadly, can help mitigate the effects of raising water rates and drought.

This list of measures is not meant to be comprehensive, but rather a starting point. Other sources of information on water efficiency are available through EPA's web site <http://www.epa.gov/owm/water-efficiency/>, and innumerable other sources, some of which may be accessed through the EPA web site.

Bathrooms – where over half of all water usage inside a house takes place:

- Do not let the water run while shaving or brushing teeth.
- Take a short shower instead of tub baths. Turn off the water while soaping or shampooing.
- If you must use the tub, close the drain before turning on the water and fill the tub only half full.
- Never use your toilet as a waste basket.

Kitchen and Laundry – simple practices that save a lot of water:

- Keep a jug of drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the faucet run until the water is cool.
- Wash fruits and vegetables in a wash basin. Use a vegetable brush.
- Do not use water to defrost frozen foods; thaw in the refrigerator overnight.
- Scrape, rather than rinse, dishes before loading into the dishwasher; wash only full loads.
- Wash only full loads of laundry or use the appropriate water level or load size selection on the washing machine.

Equipment – homes with high efficiency plumbing fixtures and appliances save about 30% of indoor water use and yield substantial savings on water and energy bills:

- Consider purchasing high efficiency toilets.
- Install low-flow faucet aerators and showerheads.
- Consider purchasing a high efficiency washing machine that can save over 50% in laundry water and energy use.
- Repair all leaks. A leaky toilet can waste hundred of dollars in water every month. To detect a leak in the toilet, add food coloring to the tank water. If the colored water appears in the bowl, the toilet is leaking. Check the float level setting. The water level must be below the overflow level. Toilet repair advice is available at www.toiletology.com/index.shtml

Landscape Irrigation – up to 75% of a home's total water use during the growing season is for outdoor purposes:

- Detect and repair all water leaks in your underground irrigation system.
- Use bath or sink water to water your plants and vegetables.
- Water the lawn or garden during the coolest part of the day (7am to 11am is best). Do not water on windy days.
- Water trees and scrubs, which have deeper root systems longer and less frequently than shallow rooted plants that require smaller amounts of water more often.
- Set sprinklers to water the lawn or garden only – not the street and sidewalk.
- Use soaker hoses or trickle irrigation systems for trees and shrubs.
- Install moisture sensors on sprinkler systems.
- Use mulch around shrubs and garden plants to reduce evaporation and cut down on weed growth.
- Remove thatch and aerate turf to encourage movement of water to the root zone.
- Raise your lawn mower cutting height – longer grass blades help shade your lawn, reduces evaporation and inhibits weed growth.
- Minimize or eliminate lawn fertilizing and pick up animal waste from your lawn, which reduces nutrient rich storm water runoff into ponds, streams and creeks.

Other Outdoors Water Saving Ideas:

- Sweep driveways, sidewalks and steps rather than hosing them off with water.
- Wash the car with water from a bucket, or consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- When using a hose, control the flow with an automatic shut-off nozzle.
- Avoid purchasing recreational water toys that require a constant stream of water.
- Consider purchasing a new water-saving swimming pool filter.
- Use a pool cover to reduce evaporation when the pool is not in use.

I hope you enjoy a few of these simple ideas. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 708-598-3400 or on the web at dweakley@paloshillsweb.org.

Have a Great Year,
Dave Weakley, Commissioner of Public Works, Sewer and Water
City of Palos Hills