

# waterfacts6



## Straight Talk About... Water Saving Actions for Homeowners

The Capital Regional District (CRD) Water Department is responsible for the supply, treatment and delivery of bulk drinking water to its municipal (wholesale) customers and for the operation of the retail water distribution system in the Western Communities and Sooke.

The municipal wholesale customers are the City of Victoria, District of Saanich, District of Oak Bay, Township of Esquimalt, Saanich Peninsula Water Commission and the Juan de Fuca Water Distribution Commission.

As well, the Department is responsible for water quality monitoring from source to individual customers throughout Greater Victoria and Sooke and for demand management programs.

### Indoors

Leaks in and around your home are usually silent but can be large water wasters. Make sure your home is leak free. The best way to check for overall leaks is to use your water meter. Follow these simple steps to determine if you have a leak.

- Shut off all your water-using appliances and fixtures, including the automatic icemaker in the fridge.
- Remove the lid from your meter box. It is usually concrete or metal — about 10 x 15 inches (25 x 37.5 cm). Take care not to damage the wires! **Note: CRD Water assumes no liability for damage or injury resulting from the removal of meter lids. Customers do so at their own risk.**
- For new meters, watch the triangle in the middle of the meter for a few minutes. In older meters watch the 10-gallon hand. If neither moves you do not have a leak.
- If you have a leak, you now will need to find out the source of the leak. The most likely culprits are toilets, faucets, showerheads, service lines and sprinkler systems.
- Often high volume leaks come from toilets. To check for a toilet leak carefully remove the toilet tank lid and add a few drops of food colouring to the tank water. Wait about 15 minutes without flushing the toilet and then check the water in your toilet bowl. If the water is coloured, you have a leak. The most common cause for leaks is a worn flapper valve. Repair these as soon as possible. A leaking toilet can waste 20-40 litres per hour.
- Leaking faucets and showerheads are also big water wasters, but are usually easier to detect than toilet leaks. Worn washers or seats are the most likely cause of the leaks. Repairing these fixtures is usually simple and



inexpensive. A dripping faucet can waste more than 35,000 litres of water per year. That is enough water to fill a bathtub 184 times.

- A leaking service line or pipe in your home can also add up to serious water waste. A small hole in a pipe wastes 280,000 litres of water in a three-month period. This is enough water to do about 900 loads of laundry. If you have a service line leak on your property you should call a plumber.
- For large water and dollar savings replace your old toilet with a 6-litre flush model. Older model toilets can use as much as 13 to 20 litres of water per flush. A family of four can save up to 80,000 litres of water a year with a 6-litre toilet. CRD Water offers a rebate toward replacing old fixtures with water efficient models. **For more information about the rebate call CRD Water at 474-9684.**
- Install a retrofitting device in your toilet to reduce water use. **Note: Do not use a brick as it can crumble and cause blockage.**
- Don't use the toilet as a garbage can. Tissues and other items are often flushed away instead of going into other appropriate disposal containers. Unnecessary flushing of the toilet even once a day can waste up to 1,000 litres of water a year.
- When showering, turn on the water to get wet, turn the shower off to soap up and then turn the shower back on to rinse off. Repeat when washing hair.
- A simple way to cut down on the amount of water used in the shower is to reduce



shower time. For every minute less you spend in the shower you can save up to 11,000 litres of water a year.

- For even greater savings replace old showerheads with water efficient models. Older model showerheads use 18 to 30 litres of water per minute. Water-efficient models use 9.5 litres or less a minute. Remember, when you reduce water use you are also saving energy by using less heated water.
- Retrofit all household faucets with water saving aerators or consider replacing with water efficient models. Aerators are inexpensive items that can be found at most hardware stores.
- Both clothes washers and dishwashers use large volumes of water. A dishwasher uses about 60 litres of water and a clothes washer can use 100 to 200 litres of water. Operate automatic dishwashers and clothes washers only when full and/or set the water level for the size of your load.
- If you are considering the purchase of a new clothes washer or dishwasher, look for one that is water and energy efficient. The initial cost for these efficient appliances is higher but the savings from water and energy pay off quickly. CRD Water offers a rebate toward replacing washing machines with water efficient models. For more information, call CRD Water at 474-9684.
- Don't run the tap for cool water. Store a pitcher of drinking water in the fridge.
- Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave rather than in water.
- Don't let the water run for brushing your teeth, instead, wet your toothbrush, turn off the faucet while brushing, rinse tooth brush quickly when finished. By turning off the faucet when brushing your teeth, you can save up to 22 litres of water.
- Don't run the faucet when washing your face or shaving, instead fill the basin with water. Filling the basin uses only about 4 litres of water while letting the faucet run can use up to 22 litres of water.

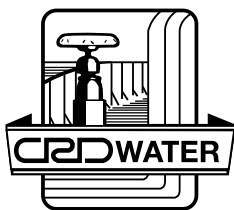


The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide information about **water saving actions you can take around your home and in your community**. You will find that most of the suggestions just require a small change in habits but putting these actions into practice can save thousands of litres of water daily.

The water saving tips are divided into indoor, outdoor and general actions. For more detailed information on landscape care call the CRD Demand Management Information Line at 474-9684 and ask for our **Landscape Care** fact sheet.

For water efficiency information and materials, contact the

**CRD Water Demand Management Information Line at 250-474-9684**



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- For regular household cleaning use a pail or bucket rather than running water.
- For heavy cleaning of grills or oven parts pre-soak them overnight.

## Outdoors

- In summer months, outdoor water use accounts for almost 50% of water used around the average home. The average garden hose delivers 27 litres of water per minute, so even leaving the hose on for a few minutes can add up to a lot of water.
- Washing your car with a hose for ten minutes uses 270 litres of water. Wash your car use a bucket of soapy water and rinse quickly with a hose with a shut-off nozzle. **Note: Under our water conservation bylaws, all hoses must be equipped with a shut-off nozzle.** Consider washing your car less often.
- Check your hose and hose connections for breaks or poor couplings. Even small leaks can add up.
- When cleaning your driveway or walkway use a broom, not a hose. It works just as well. Using the hose to clean your driveway or walkway will use almost 540 litres of water in just 20 minutes.
- Raise your lawn mower height to its highest level or at least 3 inches (8 cm). A higher cut leaves the grass blades longer: this shades the root system, encourages roots to grow deeper and holds moisture in.
- Install a barrel to collect rainwater.

## Water Conservation Bylaw

The **Stage 1 water conservation bylaw is implemented every year from May 1 through September 30** unless more stringent water conservation measures are needed. Stage 2 and 3 are implemented according to the severity of the water shortage. Stage 2 is acute and Stage 3 is severe. Each level requires increasingly larger reductions in water use.

## General Water Saving Tips

- Follow all water conservation bylaws when in effect.
- Report water losses such as: broken mains, running hydrants, etc. to your municipality.
- Encourage water efficiency at your work place.
- Encourage neighbours, friends and family to take water saving actions.

This publication will be available on our web site at [www.crd.bc.ca/water](http://www.crd.bc.ca/water)