

## **How much water does an average household use?**

### **How many people live in your home?**

An average usage is 50 gallons/day/person. An average usage for a family of four for a 30-day billing period would be 8,000 gallons or more.

Teens tend to stay in the shower longer.

New babies cause more laundry.

Children home on vacation or other house guests will raise the usage.

While the size of the family is a large factor in how much water is used, the habits of the individuals are the larger cause of high use.

### **Are your toilets old – or have you replaced them?**

The toilet uses about 30% of a home's interior water use. A pre-1954 toilet will use as much as 5 gallons per flush. After 1954, the standard dropped to 3.5 gallons, and a toilet manufactured after 1994 will use only 1.6 gallons per flush.

### **When is the last time you replaced the flappers in the back of the toilet?**

A running toilet can create your water bill to increase dramatically! It can run up to 20 to 30 thousand gallons or more. Even if you don't hear it running, you still may have a bad flapper. It's a good idea to complete a dye test or change them out if it's been over 2 years.

### **Do you take a shower or bath?**

Showering and bathing are the second largest water users. A bathtub usually uses 25 to 40 gallons. A 5-minute shower typically uses 12.5 gallons. A Jacuzzi-type tub may use 45 gallons per bath.

**Tip** - Replace the showerhead with one that uses 2.5 gallons per minute – or an ultra-high efficient showerhead that runs 1.5 gallons per minute. Also consider a shut-off valve at the showerhead so that water may be turned off while soaping up. You will know to replace an existing showerhead if a one-gallon bucket placed under the flow takes less than 20 seconds to fill.

### **What are your habits when brushing your teeth, shaving or other sink use?**

If you leave the water running, the water usage from the bathroom faucet will be 3 to 5

gallons per minute, depending on water pressure.

### **Do you have any bathroom water leaks?**

A leaky toilet can increase water usage from \$5 a month for a small leak to \$80 for a large leak. A faucet with a slow drip wastes 14 gallons a day.

### **What kind of clothes washer do you have?**

A typical top-loading clothes washer uses 40-45 gallons per load. When you are in the market for a new clothes washer, consider a new high-efficient front loading, horizontal axis model. It will use an average of 30% less water and 40-50% less energy.

**Tip** - Wait until you have a full load of clothes to wash, otherwise match the water level to the load size.

**Tip** - Reread the manufacturer's directions to see how many pounds of dry clothes are recommended for each load, and then weigh a load or two to see if you are using the washer to its capacity.

### **Do you have a dishwasher?**

Depending on how you use it, a dishwasher can be a real water-saving device. A full dishwasher uses about 15 gallons per cycle or less and will wash dishes from several meals in one cycle. The most efficient use is to scrape dishes and load into the machine. If the dishes are rinsed under running water, the use soars. Only 3 minutes of running water, preparing dishes for the dishwasher, uses 13 to 21 gallons of water.

### **Do you wash dishes by hand?**

A sink full of water is about 9 gallons. A second sink full of water, for rinsing is another 9 gallons. A low usage for one meal of hand-washed dishes is 18 gallons. If you rinse dishes under running water, a kitchen faucet will run 4 to 7 gallons per minute, depending on water pressure.

**Tip** - Install a faucet aerator and reduce the water flow to 2.5 gallons per minute.

### **Do you have an in-ground lawn irrigation system?**

It is very easy to have an irrigation system leak and be unaware of it. Irrigation systems should be monitored closely.

### **Is your irrigation system on an automatic schedule?**

Irrigation systems with automatic timers use 47% more water on average than irrigation systems without timers. Match the watering cycle with the needs of the lawn.

### **Do you have soil moisture sensors or rain sensors?**

This kind of device will override the irrigation controls and help prevent over-watering.

**Tip** - A good rule of thumb for judging when grass needs water is to step on the grass and water only if it does not spring back. Most lawns require one inch of water per week. Measure this with a rain gauge or other basin as simple as an empty tuna can. Don't forget to count the rainfall!

### **Do you have a swimming pool?**

In-ground and above-ground pools require an initial filling and more water has to be added to replace splashing and evaporation loss.

**Tip** - A pool cover could save the amount that has to be added or replaced.

### **Do you let the hose run?**

Letting water run from a hose while washing a car or any other chore can waste a large amount of water. For example:

1/2-inch hose = 7 - 9 gallons/minute

5/8-inch hose = 10 - 15 gallons/minute

3/4-inch hose = 14 - 20 gallons/minute

**Tip** - Be sure to use a broom to clean the sidewalk or driveway and not the hose!