

## Saving water for plants

Before you take a shower, catch the cold to lukewarm water that initially comes out the faucet or showerhead.

You can also save water from washing dishes or handwashing clothes, etc.

## Location of water shut-off valve

If there is a water shut-off valve in the plumbing system for your residence, please make sure you know where it is so you can quickly turn off the water if you have a leak.

You may need to ask the property manager or maintenance staff about the location of the shut-off valve if there is one for your residence.

For a brochure including a brightly colored paper tag you can use to mark the location of the shut-off, please contact us at 919-537-4267 or [info@owasa.org](mailto:info@owasa.org).

## If you have an OWASA account, you can get our lowest water rates by conserving

OWASA has five “tiered” water rates, which rise with the level of water use.

For example, if you use 2,000 or fewer gallons per month, our lowest rate applies: \$2.63 per 1,000 gallons.

If you use 3,000 to 5,000 gallons, our second highest rate applies: \$6.39 per 1,000

gallons. Water rates are higher for using 6,000 gallons or more per month.

## How does your water use compare?

Water use in apartment or other multi-family residence with an individual OWASA meter averages about 3,000 gallons per month.

Of course, your water use may differ from this average due to factors such as the number of people in the household.

## Reducing hot water use will also lower energy costs

Using less hot water for showers and baths, washing clothes and dishes, etc. will also help reduce your electric and gas bills.

Hot water use accounts for about 17% of energy use in a residence.

## Water conservation reduces greenhouse gas emissions

All water and wastewater is pumped and most of the energy for pumping comes from fossil fuels.

Conserving therefore reduces greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), the key factor in climate change.

Using 3,000 gallons of water and sewer service per month involves 275 kilowatt hours per year and an estimated 253 pounds of GHGs.

## Highlights

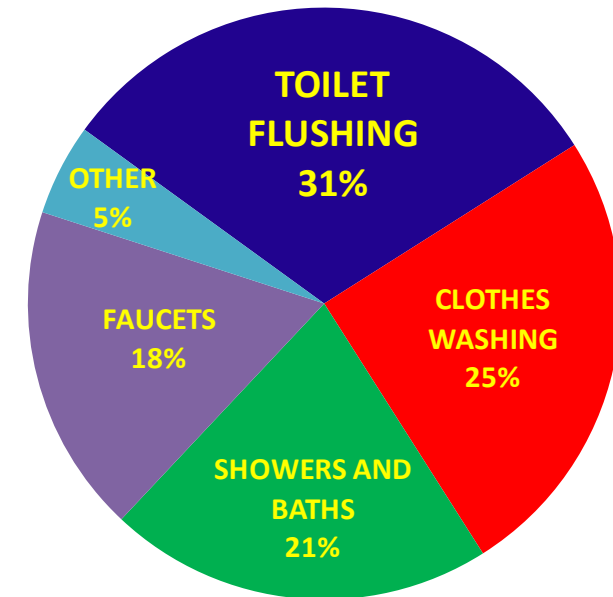
- ◆ Toilet flushing is the primary use of water inside a home, so many of the best ways to conserve water involve toilets.
- ◆ To reduce water use in your toilets,
  - put a container of water in the tank,
  - adjust the fill valve and/or
  - flush less often.
- ◆ Take short showers (no more than 5 minutes).
- ◆ To save more, you can turn the water off while you lather and scrub with soap, and turn the water back on to rise.
- ◆ We recommend checking your water bills monthly to monitor your water use.
- ◆ If your water use goes up unexpectedly, the cause may be a leak in a toilet, faucet, pipe, etc.
- ◆ If you find and fix a leak and if you have an OWASA account, please contact OWASA Customer Service at 919-537-4343 or [customerservice@owasa.org](mailto:customerservice@owasa.org) to ask about getting an account credit.

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# HOW TO LOWER YOUR WATER BILLS

Information for people who rent apartments, etc.



Intentional water use in a home



Orange Water and Sewer Authority

A public, non-profit agency providing water, sewer and reclaimed water services to the Carrboro-Chapel Hill community

## There are dozens of ways to save water and reduce your OWASA bills

But some conservation methods and investments will save more water and dollars than others.

The information below is intended to help you choose the best ways to conserve water and thereby lower your water and sewer costs.



### Toilet flushing is the largest water use inside a home

Toilet flushing accounts for almost one-third of intentional indoor water use in residences.

Reducing the amount of water you flush is therefore usually the best way to reduce your OWASA bills.

#### How to flush less water

Put a container of water in the tank.

To keep the container from moving, you can put metal, stones, etc. inside.

Or, fill the container with water to a level higher than the water in the tank.

The container should be placed carefully in the tank so it does not interfere with the flapper, fill valve, flush lever, chain, etc.

Ask the property manager or maintenance staff about adjusting the fill valve so that the tank will hold less water.

You can flush less often (when you feel it is necessary).

#### Leaks

Some research indicates that leaks account for 14% of residential water use.

If you receive a bill from OWASA or from a private company, please review your bills for unexpected increases in water use, which may indicate there is a leak somewhere in the plumbing system or in a fixture.

Check regularly for leaks in water pipes, toilets, hoses, spigots, faucets, washer if you have one, etc.), and repair leaks quickly.

Toilets are one of the most common places for leaks, which can waste a large amount of water (possibly more than 100,000 gallons in a month).

To check a toilet, put food dye in the tank and wait 15 to 20 minutes without flushing. If dye appears in the bowl, there is a leak (probably at the flapper or fill valve).



#### If you have an OWASA account and you find and fix a leak

Please contact our Customer Service staff at 919-537-4343 or [customerservice@owasa.org](mailto:customerservice@owasa.org) to ask about getting a credit on your OWASA bill.

Our credit for fixing a leak does not cover all of the cost of the leaked water, so it is to your advantage to fix leaks promptly.

#### Showering and bathing

Take short showers (5 minutes or less). For extra savings, you can turn off the water while you lather and scrub. Showering for 5 minutes will also use much less water than

a bath, which may use 40 gallons if a typical tub is half full.

#### Water-saving showerheads

Showerheads are normally marked to show how much water they use with water pressure of 80 pounds per square inch. For example, a showerhead labelled “2.5 gpm” has a rating of 2.5 gallons per minute.

If your showerheads are rated at 2.5 gallons or more per minute, you may wish to ask the property manager whether you or the maintenance staff may install showerheads that use less water.

Proper installation is necessary to prevent leaks, so it is best if the maintenance staff can do the installation. If you are allowed to install a showerhead, get advice and guidance from someone who knows how to do so with the proper tool, sealing tape for the pipe threads, etc.

Using less hot water will also lower your energy use and costs.

#### Washing clothes and dishes

Wash dishes and clothes when you have a full load.

#### Faucets

Turn off the water when not needed to brush your teeth, wash hands, etc. Install an aerator or a more efficient one to reduce water flow at a faucet.