

## **WATER CONSERVATION TIPS**

It is important to remember that water conservation is not just for drought or times of water shortage, but should be practiced **all the time**. The City of Wheatland encourages each resident to do their part and try to reduce their water usage by at least 20 percent. Water is not an endless resource and must be used efficiently and not be wasted. We all must do our part to learn and teach the importance of water and the wise use of it. This will ensure an adequate supply of water for us and future generations. The City encourages sound water use practices that reduce the amount of stress that we place on our city resources and limits workloads from our wells, reducing wear and tear on major infrastructure such as wells and pumps, our wastewater treatment plant pumps and equipment, and the distribution systems that deliver water to our customers. Water conservation can postpone or eliminate the need for making major investments in new infrastructure and not to mention that it saves you money on your water bill. The following tips will get you started and get you saving.

### **SAVING WATER INDOORS:**

- Never put water down the drain when there may be another use for it such as watering a plant or garden or cleaning around your home.
- Verify that your home is leak-free, because many homes have hidden water leaks. Read your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same there is a leak.
- Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. If only one of your faucets is dripping at a rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste over 220 gallons per month which in turn may increase the cost of your water bill.
- Check for toilet tank leaks by adding food coloring to the tank. If the toilet is leaking, color will appear in the toilet bowl within 30 minutes. Check the bowl for worn out, corroded or bent parts. Most replacement parts are inexpensive, readily available and easily installed. (Flush as soon as test is done, since food coloring may stain tank.) If toilet handle sticks in the flush position letting water run constantly, replace or adjust it.
- Install a toilet dam or displacement device such as a bag or bottle to cut down on the amount of water needed for each flush. Be sure installation does not interfere with the operating parts. When purchasing new or replacement toilets, consider low-volume units which use less than half the water of older models.
- Take shorter showers. Replace your showerhead with an ultra-low-flow version. Turn water on to get wet; turn off

to lather up; then turn back on to rinse off. Repeat when washing your hair.

- Store drinking water in the refrigerator. Don't let the tap run while you are waiting for cool water to flow.
- Do not use running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods. Defrost food overnight in the refrigerator or use the defrost setting on your microwave.
- Consider installing an instant water heater on your kitchen sink so you don't have to let the water run while it heats up. This will reduce water heating costs for your household.
- Insulate your water pipes. You'll get hot water faster and avoid wasting water while it heats up.
- Don't let water run while shaving or washing your face. Brush your teeth first while waiting for water to get hot, then wash or shave after filling the basin.
- Install water softening systems only when necessary. Save water and salt by running the minimum amount of regenerations necessary to maintain water softness. Turn softeners off while on vacation.
- Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects and other similar waste in the trash rather than the toilet.
- Operate automatic dishwashers and clothes washers only when they are fully loaded. Set the water level for the size of load you are using.
- When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water. Quickly rinse under a slow-moving stream from the faucet.

### **SAVING WATER OUTDOORS:**

- **Don't over water your lawn.** Only water when your lawn is thirsty. Over watering promotes shallow root growth making your lawn less hardy. (To determine if your lawn needs to be watered, simply walk across the grass. If you leave footprints, it's time to water.)
- Maintain a lawn height of 2 1/2 to 3 inches to help protect the roots from heat stress and reduce the loss of moisture to evaporation.
- Water before 7 A.M. or after 9 P.M. and avoid watering on windy days. This reduces losses from evaporation.
- Water in several short sessions rather than one long one. For example, three ten minute sessions spaced 30 minutes to an hour apart will allow your lawn to better absorb moisture than one straight 30 minute session.
- Install moisture sensors in each irrigation zone (sunny, shady, etc.) to better determine irrigation needs.

- Check sprinkler system valves periodically for leaks and keep the heads in good repair.
- Adjust the timer on automatic sprinklers according to seasonal water demands and weather conditions.
- Install a rain shut-off device on automatic sprinklers to eliminate unneeded applications.
- Make sure your sprinkler is placed so it only waters the lawn, not the sidewalk, pavement, or cutter.
- Avoid sprinklers that spray a fine mist, which increases evaporation.
- Avoid over-fertilizing your lawn. The application of fertilizers increases the need for water. Don't fertilize monthly, instead apply fertilizers which contain slow-release, water-insoluble forms of nitrogen.
- Do not leave sprinklers or hoses unattended. Your garden hoses can pour out 600 gallons or more in only a few hours, so don't leave the sprinkler running all day. Use a kitchen timer to remind yourself to turn it off.
- Avoid planting turf in areas that are difficult to irrigate properly such as steep inclines and isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways.
- Promote deep root growth through a combination of proper watering, aerating, appropriate fertilization, thatch (grass clippings) control, and attention to lawn height. A lawn with deep roots requires less water and is more resistant to drought and disease.
- Mulch around plants, bushes and trees to help the soil retain moisture, discourage the growth of weeds, and provide essential nutrients.
- Plant in the spring or fall, when watering requirements are lower.
- When choosing plants, keep in mind that smaller ones require less water to become established.
- Cover your spa or pool to reduce evaporation. An average size pool left uncovered can lose as much as 1,000 gallons (3,785 liters) of water per month. Also, check your spa or pool for leaks and have them repaired.
- Wash your car with a bucket of soapy water and use a nozzle to stop the flow of water from the hose between rinsing.
- Check all hoses, connectors and spigots regularly. Replace hard leaky hose washers to eliminate leaks.