Conservation Tips for the Bathroom

Shower Smart

New Year's Resolution: Save 1,000 gallons of water each month! It's easier than you think. Just replace your old shower head and shave one minute off your shower time- that's it! Older shower heads use between 4 and 7 gallons per minute (gpm). A new one will run about 2.5 gpm. Let's assume a two-person household with each person taking 25 showers a month. If they each take 8-minute showers using a 4.75 gpm shower head, they are using 1,900 gallons on water each month. However, by taking 7-minute showers using a 2.5 gpm shower head, they would use only 875 gallons per month. That's 1,025 gallons of water saved each month, and 12,300 gallons saved each year! Shower timers are a great and inexpensive way to keep track of your shower

Bath or Shower?

Taking a bath generally uses a more water than taking a shower. The average shower uses 2.5 gallons of water per minute, so an eight minute shower will use 20 gallons of water. The average bather will use 35 gallons of water. A short shower is the way to go if you're conserving water. Love your bath? There are ways to save in the tub! When running a bath, plug the drain before you turn the water on and adjust the temperature as the tub fills. Fill the tub less than half way for an adult, a quarter or less for children. And if you have more than one small child, consider bathing them together to save time and water.

Fix Leaky Toilets

Fix leaky toilets. A "running" toilet can waste two gallons of water per minute. A silent leak can waste up to 7,000 gallons per month. To find silent leaks, put a few drops of food coloring in your toilet tank. Wait a few minutes and look in the bowl. If you see color in the toilet bowl, the tank has a silent leak. Toilet leaks are typically caused by either a worn out flapper valve or a fill valve that doesn't completely shut off when the tank is full. Click on the related link below for a video on how to easily replace a leaky flapper valve.’

Don't Flush Your Money Away

Did you know that the largest indoor water use in most homes is toilet flushing? If you have an older, conventional toilet you are probably using more water than you need to. Can’t afford to replace your old toilet? Try an inexpensive water-displacement item, such as a tank bank or a float booster. A tank bank, which can be purchased for around $2, is a displacement bag that will reduce the amount of water in your existing tank by about 0.8 gallons, saving that amount of water with each flush. Just fill the displacement bag with water, close the valve, and hang the bag inside the tank of the toilet with the bag's hook. The tank bank is constructed of non-corrosive materials that resist microbes & fungal growth. Another option is a float booster, which can be purchased for around $5. It attaches, without tools, underneath the current float ball in pre-1986 toilets. The float booster decreases the water level in the toilet, saving approximately 1 gallon of water per flush. Float boosters are also non-degradable, so your savings will continue year after year. Not only will these simple additions to your toilet tank save

water, but they will also save on your water bill. A small plastic bottle filled with water will also do the trick, but do not use a brick that might disintegrate and damage plumbing.

Replace Your Old Toilet

If you decide that it's time for a toilet replacement in your home or business, you are well on your way to significant water savings. Toilets made before 1993 use 3.5 to 8 gallons of water per flush (gpf). High efficiency toilets manufactured after 1993 use 1.6 gpf or less. (You can find the date of manufacture of most toilets on the underside of the tank lid.) Toilets labeled by the EPA's WaterSense program consume only 1.28 gpf without sacrificing performance. These nifty new toilets cost less than you think! You can get a good high-efficiency dual-flush toilet for under $200. Considering that a family of four can save over 20,000 gallons of water per year by switching, these toilets will more than pay for themselves over time.

Not ready to replace? Other ways to increase your toilet's efficiency are to make sure your flapper is working properly, only flush when necessary, don't use your toilet as a wastebasket, and regularly check for leaks.

Retrofit Old Faucets

Retrofit all wasteful household faucets by installing aerators with flow restrictors. Screw-on aerators for bathroom and kitchen faucets are generally available in hardware stores for under $2, and can be installed with minimum effort. Aerators can save from half a gallon to over 4.5 gallons per faucet per day, which can really add up over time.

Where's Your Shut-Off Valve?

Know where your master water shut-off valve is located! Shut-off valves can generally be found where the water pipe enters the structure. Family members and coworkers should learn where they are located and how to turn them off in the event of an emergency, such as when a faucet becomes a fountain or a pipe inside a wall bursts. It could save hundreds of gallons of water and prevent thousands of dollars' worth of damage to your home or business

Get an Instant Hot Water Heater

Tired of waiting for the water to warm up? Consider installing an **instant hot water heater,** also called a tankless or on demand hot water heater. You can choose either a point-of-use unit for a specific location or a whole-house unit, depending on your needs. These units heat water on demand instead of storing it in a tank. This process is energy efficient because it eliminates the heat lost and energy wasted by heating water only to store it in a tank. Plus, you save water because you don't have to let the water run while waiting for it to warm up. You could save up to 40% on your energy bill, qualify for a federal energy tax credit, and save hundreds of gallons of water each month. Instant hot water heaters come in a variety of types and sizes, costing anywhere from a hundred to thousands of dollars, so be sure to get one that meets your needs.