



# Water Saving Tips

FACT SHEET

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If you're looking to cut down on your water bill or to improve your water conservation efforts, check out CUB's tips on how to save water.

## Why is my water bill so high?

**Water Usage.** Some municipalities charge you a flat fee for your water service, which means you don't get charged for your actual water usage. This takes away the incentive to be efficient, and customers often pay more than they should. Some communities may bill you once every few months, which means larger, albeit fewer, bills. Lastly, private water utilities are motivated by profit and therefore often increase the rate to line their pockets.

**Infrastructure.** Illinois municipalities lose billions of gallons of water each year due to leaky pipes. It is expensive to replace deteriorating pipes, pumps, hydrants and meters. If you live further away from your water source, you will be charged more for that water as it passes through several other communities and is marked up.

## How can I save money at home?

### Water Usage

- Wash larger loads of laundry. Smaller loads can quickly add up. You'll save water by not running so many cycles (and you'll be helping out your natural gas and electric bills as well).
- Turn off the water during daily activities like brushing your teeth. This can save up to 20 gallons of water per person a week.
- Avoid running water while you shave. Fill the bottom of the sink with a few inches of warm water in which to rinse your razor.
- If you use a dishwasher, only run full loads. If you wash dishes by hand, don't leave the water running for rinsing. If you have two sinks, you can fill one with rinse water. If you have one sink, gather all your washed dishes in a dish rack, then rinse them quickly with a spray device or a pan of water.
- Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator. This puts a stop to the wasteful practice of running tap water to cool it for drinking.
- A typical shower uses five to ten gallons of water a minute. Limit your showers to the time it takes to soap up, wash down and rinse off.
- Wash your hands with cold water. Washing your hands with soap and cold water is just as effective as washing them with hot water. Switching to cold means you'll waste less water if you're not waiting for the water to get hot.

### Infrastructure

- Fix toilet and faucet leaks. Toilets can waste nearly 50 gallons of water per year and faucets can waste 2,700 gallons. Water leaks can account for almost 12 percent of your water bill.
- Insulate your pipes so that water heats up faster so that it doesn't need to be run as long.
- Purchase water-saving products, particularly those with WaterSense labeling. The EPA certifies that these products, like a low-flow showerhead, use 20 percent less water but perform just as well.
- Replace your old toilet. Pre-1993 toilets use an average of 3.5 gallons per flush and use as many as 7 gallons per flush. Post-1993 toilets use just 1.6 gallons per flush, making them far more efficient. Cutting your toilet's water use by more than half could save big on your water bill.

### Outdoor Tips

- Use the hose sparingly outdoors. Sweep away dirt and debris with a broom instead of using the hose to wash down driveways, sidewalks, porches and exterior steps.
- Turn the hose off between rinses when washing the car to save about 150 gallons of water.
- Water your lawn until the top 6 to 8 inches of soil are wet. It is recommended to water your grass 1 to 2 times per week, and be cautious not to overwater your lawn.
- Water your lawn when the temperature outside is cooler—before 10 a.m. or between 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. If you water during the heat of the day, the sun will evaporate water that was meant for your grass. But avoid watering your grass too late in the day. Grass blades need time to dry before nightfall to prevent-disease and fungus from growing on your lawn.
- Plant drought-resistant trees and plants. Many beautiful trees and plants thrive without watering.
- Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants. Mulch helps slow the evaporation of moisture, keeping you from needing to water as often.
- If you use sprinklers, position them so that water lands on your lawn or garden, not on your driveway or sidewalk, areas where the water does no good.

### Contact Your Utility

If you notice a significant change in your bill, contact your utility company as soon as possible. Also, find out if your utility offers free or low-cost water efficiency products.