



The Board

Divisions

Doing Business

Water Quality

Water Resources

Conservation

Jobs

- Cents-able savings outdoors
- Household Water Savings Tips
- Irrigation Tips
- Landscapes
- Leaks
- Money Saving Tips Indoors
- Rebates
- Residential Sprinkler Surveys
- Sample Lawn Watering Schedule
- Sprinkle Smart
- Sprinkler & Landscape Design
- Sprinkler System Repair Video
- Turf trends
- Videos - Sprinkler System Repair
- Water Management & Conservation Plan
- WaterSense Factsheets
- Your Water Usage

200 S. Ivy St. - Room 177  
 Medford, OR 97501  
 Phone: (541) 774-2436  
 Fax: (541) 774-2555  
 Contact: Laura Hodnett, Public Information Coordinator  
 Hours: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM



Medford Water Commission  
 200 S. Ivy St. - Room 177  
 Medford, Oregon 97501  
 CS/Billing: 541-774-2430

# Medford Water Commission

541.774.2430

## Conservation

Conservation plays an important role in water resource management. The Medford Water Commission recently published a [Water Management and Conservation Plan](#) that contains projections for the next 50 years. The plan will be reviewed in five years and a new plan will be required in 10 years.

The Commission offers a variety of resources, services, programs and information to help you meet your water conservation goals and save money as well.

### Your Water Usage

Check out your [monthly water consumption](#) and compare it with that of your neighbors and the system as a whole.

### Water Infoline

(541) 774-2460

Check the homepage or call during the summer months to get the [ET](#), which is how much water you need to apply each week, based on local weather trends.

### Rebates

The Commission is now offering [rebates](#) to single family residence customers in the City of Medford for installation of [WaterSense®](#) certified toilets. Apply for this money-saving program by printing out and submitting this [form!](#)

### Residential Sprinkler Survey Program

(541) 774-2435

Free [sprinkler system analysis](#) is offered to Medford residents in the summertime.

### Related Information

- [H2O House](#)
- [AWWA's WaterWiser](#)
- [H2O Conserve](#)
- [US Water Monitor](#)
- [WaterSense](#)

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### Cents-able savings outdoors

- When using garden hoses for hand watering or car washing, *always* make sure they're equipped with nozzles that improve the effectiveness of the spray pattern and automatically turn the water off when not in use.
- If sprinkling from hoses, add timing devices to the hose bib to make sure you don't forget to turn sprinklers off when intended.
- Adjust sprinklers to make sure they are facing the right direction and spraying the correct distance. Water that sprays onto unintended areas or hits the house not only wastes water but can actually cause damage.
- Give drip irrigation systems a checkup to make sure that lines haven't been accidentally cut or emitters popped off. Such repairs are simple and inexpensive, and can avoid a lot of water going to waste.
- Adjust sprinkling system timers to match the weather. Call our Lawn Watering Infoline at 774-2460 for up to date watering information.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to tidy up paved surfaces; you'll get a little exercise and save water.
- Make the most of your sprinkling by watering between sunset and sunrise. Avoid mid-day and evenings when it is still quite hot and breezy, as you can scald plants and lose as much as 1/3 of your sprinkling to evaporation.
- Add a little mulch around shrubs and flowers. It will cool roots, lessen evaporation and enrich the soil as it breaks down.



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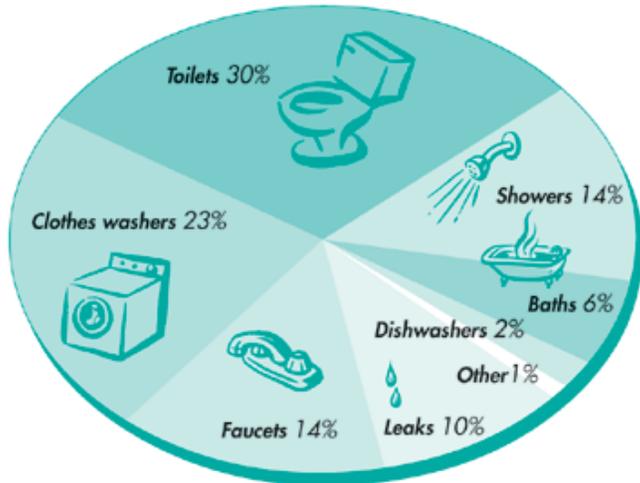
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# HOUSEHOLD WATER SAVINGS TIPS

## SAVING WATER INDOORS

The average single family residential customer in Medford uses around 5,000 gallons of water per month indoors. Homes with 1 to 2 residents often use even less. Following is a typical breakdown of water used in the home.



[www.metrovancouver.org](http://www.metrovancouver.org)

### In the Kitchen

- ◆ Your dishwasher uses the same amount of water whether it is full or nearly empty of dishes, so wait until it's full to run it. Many dishwashers have a water saver cycle to save even more water.
- ◆ Keep a container of drinking water in the refrigerator, instead of letting the faucet run until the water cools down.
- ◆ Avoid just letting the water run when rinsing vegetables, cleaning dishes or to defrost food.
- ◆ Fix leaks promptly! Even a small faucet drip can waste 20 gallons of water each day. Large leaks can waste hundreds of gallons per day.

### In the Laundry Room

- ◆ Adjust the water level of washing machines to fit the size of the load. Better yet, wait until you have full loads to wash.
- ◆ When purchasing a new washing machine, consider front-load models, which typically use one-third less water than top-load machines.

### In the Bathroom



#### Toilet

- ◆ For water savings with an existing toilet, install early-closing flappers or place small containers filled with pebbles and water in open spaces within the tank.
- ◆ Even better, replace an old toilet with a new model and use  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  as much water each time you flush. Install WaterSense<sup>®</sup> certified toilets and save even more.
- ◆ Toilet leaks are common and easily repaired with inexpensive replacement parts. Occasionally check for toilet leaks by adding about 10 drops of food coloring to the tank. If the toilet is leaking, color will appear in the bowl within 15-20 minutes.
- ◆ Avoid using the toilet as a wastebasket.

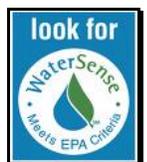
#### Shower

- ◆ Replacing a shower head is easy and relatively inexpensive. Today's standard models use  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  as much water as older relics. WaterSense models save even more, while also being certified to perform well.
- ◆ Simply taking shorter showers will save gallons of water. A bath can use more or less than a shower depending on how high it is filled.

#### Faucets

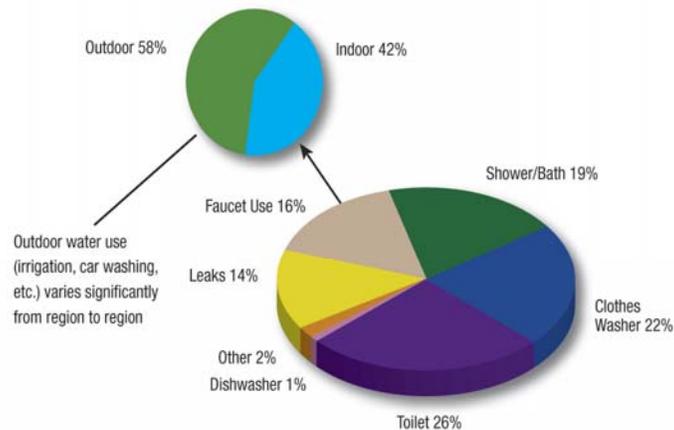
- ◆ Changing an aerator is both simple and very low cost. Look for aerators that flow  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 gallon per minute for bathroom faucets. These typically function well while using less than half as much water as current standard faucets and about  $\frac{1}{8}$  as much as older faucets. If the faucet currently has no aerator at all, savings from adding one will be even more.
- ◆ Avoid letting the water run while brushing your teeth or shaving.

Many products are now WaterSense certified. Look for WaterSense labels to help you identify products that meet high water efficiency standards and perform well too.



# SAVING WATER OUTDOORS

In the summer, average residential water use is approximately 5 times higher than in the winter; mainly due to landscape irrigation.



Residential uses of water in the United States (typically 200 gallons per day per household).  
Data from Mayer, et al. Residential End Uses of Water, 1999.

## Watering Wisely

- ◆ Water landscaping only when needed. As a general rule, lawns only need watering 3-5 days a week in the summer. Daily watering may only be necessary when temperatures reach over 100 degrees.
- ◆ Water between sunset and sunrise when temperatures and wind are the lowest. Watering during the middle of the day can result in a 30% increase in required water due to evaporation and wind.
- ◆ Step on the grass; if it springs back up when you move your foot, it does not need water.
- ◆ Avoid over-fertilizing your lawn. Applying fertilizer increases the need for water.
- ◆ Group plants with similar watering needs in the same areas.
- ◆ Since our local soils tend to contain a lot of clay and can't absorb water quickly, try breaking watering times into two or more shorter cycles, with about an hour resting time in between. This will reduce run-off and increase the amount of water soaking into the ground.
- ◆ Check the Medford Water Commission **website** or call us at **774-2435** for a sample watering schedule.
- ◆ You can also find more information on current watering needs by calling our **Lawn Watering Infoline at 774-2460**.

## Sprinkler Care

- ◆ Adjust sprinklers to avoid watering sidewalks and driveways.
- ◆ Be sure to fix all leaks promptly no matter how small they may seem. Even a small leak can waste hundreds of gallons of water.
- ◆ Give your sprinkler system an occasional checkup. If you haven't observed your system operating lately, turn it on and make sure sprinklers are all facing the right direction and functioning properly.

## Yard Maintenance

- ◆ Mulching and adding compost to soil can help soil absorb and store water, minimize evaporation, reduce erosion and help control weeds.
- ◆ Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway or sidewalk. A hose can use 100 gallons in 10 minutes.
- ◆ Raise your lawn mower level to 3 inches. This encourages grass roots to grow deeper, shades the root system and holds soil moisture better than a closely clipped lawn.
- ◆ Keep your lawn mower blades sharpened. Dull blades tear grass, forcing it to use more water.

## Car Washing

- ◆ Consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- ◆ If you use a hose to wash your car, be sure to use a hose nozzle that turns the water off when you are not using it. Washing a car for 10 minutes can easily use 100 gallons of water if you let the water run the entire time.
- ◆ Wash with a bucket of water and use the hose only for quick rinses.
- ◆ Wash items such as bicycles and trash cans on the lawn to prevent the water from running down the storm drain.



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[The Board](#)[Divisions](#)[Doing Business](#)[Water Quality](#)[Water Resources](#)[Conservation](#)[Jobs](#)[Back to Conservation](#)[Cents-able savings outdoors](#)[Household Water Savings Tips](#)[Irrigation Tips](#)[Landscapes](#)[Leaks](#)[Money Saving Tips Indoors](#)[Rebates](#)[Residential Sprinkler Surveys](#)[Sample Lawn Watering Schedule](#)[Sprinkle Smart](#)[Sprinkler & Landscape Design](#)[Sprinkler System Repair Video](#)[Turf trends](#)[Videos - Sprinkler System Repair](#)[Water Management & Conservation Plan](#)[WaterSense Factsheets](#)[Your Water Usage](#)200 S. Ivy St. - Room 177  
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## Irrigation Tips

Do you have high summer-water use? Try some of the following:

- Avoid watering every day, especially in the spring and early summer. You'll encourage roots to grow down to seek water, and lessen the potential for plant diseases.
- Run sprinklers very early in the morning. Complete your watering before 6:00 AM to take advantage of calm air, the lowest temperatures of the day, and fewer competing water uses. There are even timers you can attach to your hose bib that can help you do this if you don't have an automatic system.
- In our clay soils, water can't soak in quickly. Instead of a single long watering cycle, run two or more shorter cycles with about an hour break between them. That way, water from each cycle can soak in before more is applied. Standard spray sprinklers can apply more water than clay soils can absorb in as little as five minutes, even less if your yard is sloped.
- Soil might look dry but still have plenty of moisture. If a 6-inch screwdriver goes easily into the soil, then wait to water.
- Run your sprinkler system manually about once a month to observe each zone operating. Are sprinklers working properly, pointing the right direction, and spray patterns not obstructed by vegetation?
- When you run your sprinklers, does the water come out in a fine mist, much of which just goes up into the air? This is a sign that the water pressure is too high for your sprinklers. Add a pressure regulator to your sprinkler system to eliminate this, and you could cut your sprinkler water use in half.
- Keep pools covered when not in use so you won't lose water to evaporation; keeping them just a little less full will also lessen the amount of water lost by splashing out.
- Surprising amounts of water can run from an open hose left running for just a few minutes. Always attach a sprinkler or soaker hose for more effective sprinkling without using nearly as much water. When using a hose for hand watering plants or washing cars, attach a nozzle that will shut off between when not being used.
- Improve soil with organic material – compost or mulch – and it will hold water better.
- Aerate lawns each spring to help water soak in and fill the holes with compost so that water can infiltrate deeper.
- Prune in spring or don't prune at all; pruning stimulates growth, which needs more water.
- Consider the long-term survivability of your current landscape and consider incorporating more climate-appropriate plants. Before selecting your plants study your environment; consider animals that exist in your landscape and your long-term needs, and make good ecological choices.
- Consider whether your yard has lawn areas that aren't being used and could be replaced with something less demanding of water and maintenance – maybe groundcovers and shrubs or a patio sitting area.
- Consider drip irrigation in shrub areas. And always irrigate grass separately from areas with shrubs and trees. If you're installing an automatic irrigation system, make sure you install a good system from the start, as making changes later will be much more difficult. And make sure that you install proper backflow prevention devices. They are required for a good reason: to protect your household water supply.
- The goal of an irrigation system is to provide water as uniformly as possible. To help achieve this, make sure sprinkler spray patterns overlap, with all portions of your lawn receiving water from at least two sprinkler heads.
- For more irrigation information during the summer months, call the Water Commission's Lawn Watering Infoline: (541) 774-2460.

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The Board

Divisions

Doing Business

Water Quality

Water Resources

Conservation

Jobs

Back to Conservation

Cents-able savings outdoors

Household Water Savings Tips

Irrigation Tips

Landscapes

- A) Finding a Landscaper
- B) Soil Amendments
- C) Irrigation Tips

Leaks

Money Saving Tips Indoors

Rebates

Residential Sprinkler Surveys

Sample Lawn Watering Schedule

Sprinkle Smart

Sprinkler & Landscape Design

Sprinkler System Repair Video

Turf trends

Videos - Sprinkler System Repair

Water Management & Conservation Plan

WaterSense Factsheets

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## Landscapes

Creating a beautiful, yet water-efficient landscape in the Rogue Valley is easier than you might think. The Medford Water Commission offers a variety of resources to help you save water outdoors while maintaining a lush landscape.





The Board

Divisions

Doing Business

Water Quality

Water Resources

Conservation

Jobs

Back to Conservation

Cents-able savings outdoors

Household Water Savings Tips

Irrigation Tips

Landscapes

Leaks

Money Saving Tips Indoors

Rebates

Residential Sprinkler Surveys

Sample Lawn Watering Schedule

Sprinkle Smart

Sprinkler & Landscape Design

Sprinkler System Repair Video

Turf trends

Videos - Sprinkler System Repair

Water Management & Conservation Plan

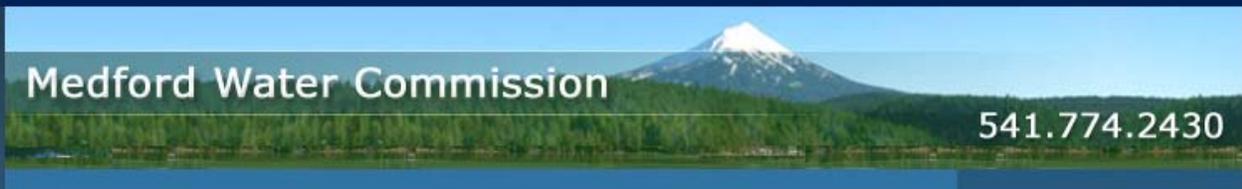
WaterSense Factsheets

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## Leaks

Could you have a leak? Check [here](#) for tips on identifying and fixing leaks.

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Water Resources

Conservation

Jobs

Back to Conservation

Cents-able savings outdoors

Household Water Savings Tips

Irrigation Tips

Landscapes

Leaks

Money Saving Tips Indoors

Rebates

Residential Sprinkler Surveys

Sample Lawn Watering Schedule

Sprinkle Smart

Sprinkler & Landscape Design

Sprinkler System Repair Video

Turf trends

Videos - Sprinkler System Repair

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## Money Saving Tips Indoors

Water is a finite resource. Only 1 percent of the earth's water is available for human use. While both population and demand on freshwater resources are increasing, supply remains constant.

One way that each of us can make a difference is with the water used inside our homes. Depending on habits and types of fixtures installed, a family of four might use 100 to 400 gallons per day. The bathroom is by far the largest consumer of indoor water and can be a major source of wasted water due to leaks. Luckily, there are many ways in which you can use water more efficiently.

Water efficient products available today work well and make saving water easy. Installing them will often save energy as well. Give some a try! Follow the links below for more information on [WaterSense®](#) labeled products.

Keep your singing in tune with the environment. Watersense labeled showerheads save water and energy.

[Learn more...](#)



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## Sprinkle Smart

For a free, [sprinkler system analysis](#) during the summer months, Medford customers can call: (541) 774-2435.

If your future plans include installing a new [landscape](#) or modifying an existing one, think of it as a one-time opportunity to do it right. Though some plants can be replaced or moved later, many aspects of a landscape are difficult to modify once installed.

If your project involves installation of an irrigation system, give plenty of thought to the sprinkler system design. Even if relying on others for this, a general understanding of design options can help assure that you'll end up with a system you're happy with. For example, you may later regret reducing costs through such means as stretching the size of sprinkler zones or selecting a time clock with limited features. Instead, if the budget is limited, leaving some areas to be finished later may be a better option than cutting corners from the start. Call (541) 774-2435 if you'd like a brochure with some sprinkler design tips.

Also remember to consider maintenance and water needs in your planning. Lawns, in particular, are very demanding of both water and maintenance, so in initial plans evaluate carefully where grass will be functional and where attractive alternatives might be better choices. Removing areas of lawn later often requires alteration of sprinkler zones, which can be difficult, if not impossible to effectively accomplish. It's therefore best to do thoughtful planning *before* installation.

This [sample watering schedule](#) will help you to water wisely.

And check out these [videos](#) on sprinkler system repairs.



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