



**Reducing  
Water Use  
and Lowering  
Your Water Bill**

**Board of Public Utilities - McPherson, Kansas**

# Stop Water Leaks Slow The Flow Use Water Wisely



Water conservation is the most cost-effective and environmentally sound way to reduce our demand for water.

The average McPherson resident uses about 168 gallons of water each day.

You can reduce your water consumption by taking a few simple steps.

This booklet will provide you with some simple steps to save water and reduce your water bill.



# Stop Water Leaks

Leaks are the biggest water waster. Even a small faucet leak can waste 300 or more gallons of water per month.

## USE YOUR WATER METER TO CHECK FOR LEAKS

- Turn off all faucets and water-using appliances
- Go to your water meter and record the current reading. Wait 30 minutes.
- Read the meter again. If the reading has changed, you have a leak.

## SEEK OUT THE LEAK

- **Leaks inside your toilet can waste up to 400 gallons per month.**
- To detect leaks, remove toilet lid and any colored cleaning agents. Flush to clear water in the bowl. Add a few drops of food coloring to the tank. If it is leaking, color will appear in the bowl within 10 to 15 minutes.
- **A dripping faucet can waste 20 gallons per day.** Most faucet leaks can be fixed by replacing washers and tightening the faucet stem.
- **A dripping showerhead can waste 75 to several hundred gallons of water a week.** If the showerhead is leaking, make sure it is screwed on tightly. Also remember to check the washer for wear.



# Stop the Flow

- Consider installing low flow devices on your faucets and showerheads. Low volume showerheads deliver 2.5 gallons of water per minute without reducing pressure. Older, high-volume fixtures use as much as 8 gallons per minute.
- Older model toilets use as much as 3 gallons of water per flush. New models are designed to use 1.6 gallons per flush. If you are looking to replace your toilet, make sure the new one is a low flow model.
- Consider installing faucet aerators and flow restrictors on all faucets. Faucet aerators are circular screened disks, usually made of metal, and are screwed onto the head of the faucet to reduce the flow. Faucet aerators require periodic cleaning of grit and scale buildup that may inhibit flow.

# Use Water Wisely



# In the Bathroom

- Turning off the water while you brush your teeth can save 3 gallons a day.
- Take shorter showers. Even a one or two minute reduction can save up to 700 gallons per month.
- Take a shower instead of a bath. A full tub requires about 70 gallons of water. A shower uses 12 to 25 gallons.

## IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

- Running only full loads in the washing machine can save 300 to 800 gallons per month.
- For washers with variable settings for water volume, select the minimum amount required per load.
- Use the shortest cycle for lightly soiled loads; normal and permanent press wash cycles use more water.
- Check hoses on the washing machine regularly for leaks.
- Pretreat stains to avoid rewashing.

# Use Water Wisely



# In the Kitchen

- Operate the dishwasher only when you have a full load.
- Scrape, don't rinse your dishes before loading in the dishwasher.
- When purchasing a new dishwasher, consider a water-efficient model.
- By using your garbage disposal sparingly you can save 50 to 100 gallons per month.
- Save 50 to 150 gallons a month by thawing frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave, not under running water.
- Store drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the tap run while you wait for cool water. You'll save 200 to 300 gallons per month.
- When washing dishes by hand, avoid letting the water run continuously in the rinsing sink.
- Instead of letting the faucet run while you clean vegetables, rinse them in a filled sink or pan. You'll save 150 to 250 gallons per month.

# Use Water Wisely



# Outside

- ◆ Putting a layer of mulch around trees and plants can save 750 to 1500 gallons of water per month.
- ◆ Water during the cool parts of the day. You'll save up to 300 gallons.
- ◆ Watering on windy days can waste up to 300 gallons of water due to evaporation.
- ◆ Don't water in the rain.
- ◆ Set lawn mower blades one notch higher. Longer grass means less evaporation and can save 500 to 1500 gallons of water per month.
- ◆ Plant native and/or drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees. Contact your local Extension Office for information on planting.
- ◆ Don't leave sprinklers or hoses unattended. Your garden hose can pour out 600 gallons or more in only a few hours. Use a timer to remind yourself to turn it off.



# Water Trivia

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Inside your house, bathroom facilities claim nearly 75% of water used.

Only 1% of the earth's water is suitable for drinking.

More than 50% of water applied to lawns is lost to evaporation or run-off due to over watering.

The EPA reports that groundwater supplies serve about 80% of the population and that 1%-4% of usable groundwater is now polluted.

If your faucet is dripping at a rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste 2,700 gallons per year. This adds to the cost of water and sewer utilities and adds to your water bill.

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