

How Water Works

ILLUSTRATED PROCESSES, EQUIPMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY

Water Conservation Reaps Big Benefits

Water conservation is a key component of overall water resources planning. Carefully designed and implemented conservation programs can bring many benefits, including the efficient use of available sources of supply, public recognition and participation, and improved support for water pricing adjustments.

A common public perception is that water conservation means restricting or curtailing customer use as a temporary response to drought. Though water use restrictions are a useful short-term drought-management tool, most utility-sponsored water conservation programs emphasize lasting long-term improvements in water use efficiency while maintaining quality of life standards. Water conservation simply means doing more with less—not doing without. Examples of potential conservation measures for single-family homes include the following:

1. Work with the real estate industry to require low-consumption toilets be installed at the time of sale. Also, provide rebates or vouchers for retrofits with low-water-use toilets—typically \$50 to \$100 per toilet replaced.
2. Work with local energy companies to offer rebates for high-efficiency clothes washers. Rebates would be scaled to water efficiency as rated by the Consortium for Energy Efficiency (www.cee1.org). Also, educate customers on the latest clothes washer water-conserving technology.
3. Use leak-detection equipment to determine if and where leaks are occurring on home premises. For low-income households, provide a plumber to the customer to repair leaks for free.
4. Distribute free retrofit kits to older single-family homes. The kit could contain a low-flow showerhead; toilet leak-detection dye tablets, displacement device, or early closure device; a faucet aerator; faucet washers to fix leaky faucets; and a pamphlet on how to conserve water.
5. Provide incentives for outdoor-use restrictions, including irrigation system upgrades, soaker hoses, mulch and soil amendments, new plant materials, and turf reduction.

Editor's Note: For more information on water conservation, these resources are available from the AWWA Bookstore (www.awwa.org/bookstore):

- *M52: Water Conservation Programs—A Planning Manual*
- *Consumer's Guide to Water Conservation (DVD)*
- *Handbook of Water Use and Conservation*
- *Socioeconomic Impacts of Water Conservation*
- *Bill Stuffer: Water Conservation at Home*

Some illustration elements exaggerated for emphasis.



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