

# Save Water and Be More Sustainable at Home

Water conservation is an important part of building more sustainable communities. In our daily lives, there are areas we can conserve water both inside and outside of the home. By conserving water, we can reduce energy use and help protect our local rivers and lakes and the **stormwater** that enters them.

With our high rainfall, water may seem plentiful, but water resources *are* finite.

Drinking water in Clark County comes from underground **aquifers**. These aquifers can dry out if we use our water faster than it soaks back underground. Plus, pumping, heating, and filtering water for use and treating wastewater requires a lot of energy and resources.

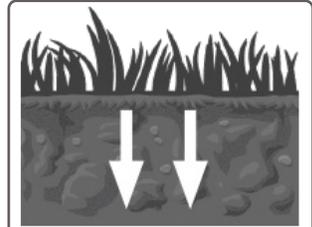
**Stormwater** is all the water that falls from the sky, like rain or snow.

**Aquifers** are underground stores of water. The water inside aquifers is called **groundwater**.

## What prevents water from reaching our aquifers?

When houses, streets, shopping centers, and businesses are built, natural soil and plants are replaced by hard surfaces, such as roofs and pavement. When rain falls on these hard surfaces, it cannot soak into the ground and replenish our aquifers. Because less rain is able to replenish our aquifers, it's especially important for us to be mindful of our water use.

**Did you know?** Letting a faucet run for five minutes uses about as much energy as running a 60-watt light bulb for 14 hours.



*Plants and soil allow stormwater to soak into the ground and become groundwater.*

## How to Save Water at Home

### Directly reduce your daily use of water

- Take shorter showers and avoid baths.
- Turn off kitchen and bathroom tap when not in active use.
- Run dishwashers and clothes washers only when full.
- No dishwasher? Wash dishes in a bucket or plug and fill your sink instead of running your tap.
- Compost your food scraps instead of running a garbage disposal.
- Take your car to a commercial car wash where the water can be collected and reused.

**Did you know?** The average American faucet runs at 2 gallons of water per minute.



### Reduce your outdoor water use

- If you need to water your yard, do so in the mornings or evenings to reduce evaporation. Don't over water.
- Make sure water does not run onto pavement or plants that don't need it. Consider switching to a drip irrigation or soaker hose set up for maximum efficiency.
- Replace grass lawns with native plants to reduce the need for watering.
- Reuse the rain. Build a rain garden or install a rain barrel to capture stormwater that can be used to water your yard.
- Visit [naturalyardcare.org](http://naturalyardcare.org) for more tips on smart watering.



### Home improvement and repair

- Replacing an appliance? Get a water-efficient version! Look for the EPA WaterSense label to guide you.
- Replace older toilets with a low flow version or put a brick or container in the tank to reduce the water use per flush.

**Did you know?** Toilets use 26% of the water in the average home.

## Find and repair leaks ASAP!

- Check your water meter reading before and after 2 hours when you did not use any water. If the readings are different, you should inspect for leaks.
- Test for leaks in your toilet by putting a few drops of dye or food coloring in the tank and watching to see if the water in the bowl changes color within 15 minutes.

**Did you know?** One drip every second adds up to over 3,000 gallons in a year. That's enough water for 180 showers!



## Consider Your Hidden Water Use

Water we use directly from taps or wells is just a small portion of our daily water use. Many common household items, food, and electricity take a lot of water to produce. For example, it takes about 713 gallons of water to produce just one cotton t-shirt! You can lower your overall **water footprint** by reducing, reusing, repairing, and recycling household goods.

Your **water footprint** is all the water you use, including your tap water and the water it takes to produce the food, electricity, goods, and services you use. Visit [watercalculator.org](http://watercalculator.org) to learn more about your water footprint.

### Reduce

- Buy items like clothes and electronics secondhand.
- Donate items you no longer use to friends, family, or nonprofit organizations.
- If you need to buy something new, look for products made from recycled materials.
- Choose items with minimal or no plastic packaging.

### Repair

- Many commonly discarded items can be reused with a little work.
- Visit [repairclarkcounty.org](http://repairclarkcounty.org) to learn about the Repair Clark County program, which matches residents with skilled volunteers to repair their broken items.



### Buy local foods

- It takes a lot of water to grow, process, package, and transport food. Buying local, whole foods and reducing food waste helps reduce water use and pollution while supporting our local economy.
- Visit [clarkfoodandfarm.org](http://clarkfoodandfarm.org) to find sources of local foods.



### Reuse or Repurpose

- Buy and use reusable items rather than disposable or single use products.
- Give old items a second life. For example, old or torn clothes can be repurposed as cleaning rags.



### Recycle

- When you cannot reduce or reuse—then recycle! Most paper, glass, cans, and some plastics can be recycled through our county's curbside recycling program.
- For more information on where you can recycle or donate specific items, visit [www.recyclinga-z.com](http://www.recyclinga-z.com).



### Conserve Energy

- Most forms of electricity production (including dams, coal, natural gas, and nuclear power) use a lot of water. Reducing your energy use at home helps save water *and* protects our environment in other ways at the same time.

## For more information

Visit [epa.gov/watersense](http://epa.gov/watersense) or [clarkcd.org/water](http://clarkcd.org/water) for more tips on conserving water at home.

To learn more about saving water and being sustainable outside your home, visit [clarkcd.org/watershedstewards](http://clarkcd.org/watershedstewards).

