

Utility Cost Control...Facts, Tips & Hints

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, residential water usage averages over 100 gallons per person per day. This equals about \$300 per year per household. Here are some ideas to help keep your water costs to a minimum.

- Since bathroom facilities account for 50% to 75% of all residential water usage, make sure there are no leaks in your toilet tanks, sinks and showerheads.
- The best way to check for toilet tank leaks is to put some food coloring in the tank. If there is a leak, the color will show up in the bowl in 20-30 minutes.
- Report any leaks to your property manager as soon as possible. Even a slow leak can be expensive. For example, a faucet leaking at the rate of one drop per second will waste hundreds of gallons of water per month.
- If toilet handle sticks frequently, Report this problem to your property manager.
- Operate dishwashers and clothes washers when they are fully loaded. Dishwashers use 7 to 25 gallons of water per full load. Washing machines can use over 50 gallons of water per load.
- Wash clothes with cold water whenever possible.
- Store drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the tap run until the water is cool.
- Turn the water off while shaving, brushing teeth and washing your face.
- Don't use the toilet as a trashcan. Every flush can take 5 to 7 gallons.
- Don't use running water to thaw frozen meat or other frozen foods. Defrost food overnight in your refrigerator.

Here are some additional energy cost saving ideas:

- Refrigerators run more efficiently when the coils are free from dust. Keep them cleaned.
- By running your dishwasher and clothes washers with full loads, you not only save water but you also reduce energy usage.
- For maximum efficiency, clean the lint filter on your clothes dryer regularly.
- Whenever possible, keep shades and blinds open to let natural light in.
- During winter months keep shades and blinds facing south open during the day to allow sunlight and heat into your home.
- Set your thermostat to 68 degrees.
- Keep your air ducts clear from obstructions.
- Replace damaged weather-stripping around doors and windows.
- If you have a fireplace, make sure the damper is closed when not in use.
- Seal windows with plastic film to keep out drafts.