



Tips to Reduce Outdoor Water Use

Water is a precious resource that should never be wasted. In Waterloo Region, we take approximately 80% of our water from the ground and the rest from the Grand River. This water is expensive to treat and conserving it also saves you money on water, energy and sewer bills.

Conserving water also lowers the impact on the environment by limiting the amount of wastewater that must be treated and released back into our rivers and streams.

On average a Waterloo Region resident uses about 275-litres of water per day.

What can you do to lower that? Check our simple suggestions that will make you water wise!

Lawn watering:

- Water only when necessary, and according to municipal by-laws. It's time to water when grass turns grey-green, and footprints remain when you walk across the lawn. If most of the lawn looks green and only spots or areas near concrete are grey, root-water or hand-water only the dry spots.
- Adjust lawn watering to the weather and soil conditions. Know how to turn off automatic sprinkler systems until needed. Avoid frequent watering. Watering too often causes your turf to develop shallow roots, making it more vulnerable to dry conditions. 2.5 cm or one inch (includes rain) per week is plenty!
- Water early in the morning, or late at night to avoid waste due to evaporation.
- Avoid using a lawn sprinkler. A single lawn sprinkler spraying 19-litres per minute uses more water in half an hour than 10 toilet flushes, two 5-minute showers, two dishwasher loads, and a full load of laundry put together!
- Depending on the size of your property, consider using a drip or trickle irrigation system, which uses 25-75 percent less water than conventional methods, and is best for your lawn. Drip irrigation is porous tubing with baffled openings which allow water to reach targeted root areas.
- If you must use a sprinkler, use a low rise sprinkler head. Make sure you're not watering sidewalks and driveways!
- When reseeding or planting, consider drought-resistant grasses, which are often more resistant to insects and disease.
- Promote a healthy lawn by aerating and mowing no shorter than 7.5 cm.

Gardening & naturescaping:

- Consider alternatives to lawns, such as naturescaping or xeriscaping. The Region of Waterloo's demonstration garden uses water-efficient plants in mixed woodlands, a prairie garden, and a rock garden.
- Group plants according to their water use, to reduce the chance of damage due to over watering.
- Look for plants with grey, fuzzy, waxy, or finely divided leaves, which are the most drought-tolerant. Plants with larger leaves generally require more water.
- Place mulch around trees and plants to keep moisture in, and reduce evaporation.
- Collect rain water using barrels and other rain harvesting equipment

Pools and spas:

- Cover pools and hot tubs when not in use
- Ensure pool is filled to correct level based upon its specifications. Overfilling can result in wasted water through splashing.
- Use water-saving pool filters, and limit backwashing to one or two minutes, or until the water becomes clear in the sight glass. Backwashing wastes approximately 318-litres of water per minute.
- Lower the pool temperature to reduce water loss to evaporation, most importantly when not in use.
- Pre-filter the first vacuum of the season. Inspect the pump strainer basket and the skimmer basket daily. Remove all debris. This will result in cleaner water and improve water circulation.
- Regularly inspect for leaks and repair them immediately. You may have a leak if you are frequently topping up your pool. The best way to inspect for leaks is to fill a bucket to the level of the pool, and sit it on the step overnight. The next day check the level of the pool compared with that of the bucket. If the pool water is lower, it's telling you that your pool has a leak.
- Topping up of pools must follow the Region of Waterloo Outdoor Water Conservation By-law. For specific regulations, visit www.regionofwaterloo.ca/water.

Vehicle washing and maintenance:

- Use a bucket and sponge to wash and rinse your car so you only need a light rinse to get rid of the soap.
- To eliminate water spots on your clean car, consider using rain water harvested with a rain barrel for that final rise.
- Use a bucket and squeegee to wash windows.
- Operate decorative fountains only when you're there to enjoy them.
- When cleaning outdoor ornamental ponds, use the waste water for lawns and gardens.
- Use a broom to clean sidewalks and driveways instead of a hose.