



## Tips for Saving Water – Outdoors and Indoors

### DCR Office of Water Resources

#### OUTDOOR WATER USE

Limits on outdoor water use are critical to help ensure that enough water is available for essential needs, including drinking water and fire protection, crop irrigation, and our natural resources.

To check your drought region and status go to:

[www.mass.gov/dcr/drought](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/drought)

#### 1) Avoid watering during a drought<sup>1</sup>

Regions in Drought Warning (Severe Drought Conditions):

- Outdoor water use should be banned.

Regions in Drought Watch (Moderate to Severe Drought Conditions):

- Limit watering to hand-held only or drip irrigation outside the hours of 9AM – 5PM to avoid evaporative losses.

Regions in Drought Advisory (Abnormally Dry Conditions):

- Limit watering to 1 day per week at the most, outside the hours of 9AM – 5PM to avoid evaporative losses.

#### 2) Abide by local water use restrictions.

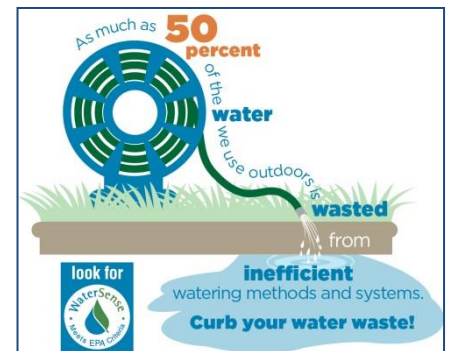
- State permits require public water systems to implement outdoor restrictions which are graduated with drought conditions. Check with your water supplier for restrictions and please do your part.

#### 3) Minimize landscape water needs through water-smart landscaping principles<sup>2</sup>:

- Maintain healthy soils (a minimum of 6-inches in depth, where possible).
- Choose native plants or plants and turf that need less water.
- Group plants according to their water needs to maximize efficiency of irrigation.
- Minimize areas of turf grass.
- Use mulch to reduce evaporation and moderate soil temperature.
- Maintain turf grass at 2½ -3 inches to shade soil and deepen roots.
- Leave grass clippings on lawn to shade and return nutrients to soil.

#### 4) Irrigate efficiently, and only if necessary

- Know plants' water needs and avoid overwatering.
- Don't water 9AM – 5PM.
- Regularly inspect and maintain irrigation systems.
- Use "smart" irrigation controllers that adjust for weather.



#### 5) Minimize your use of water for outdoor cleaning

- Sweep driveways, walks, patios, and other outdoor areas with a broom rather than hosing them off.
- Wash vehicles using a bucket and sponge, employing a hose with a shut-off nozzle for rinse only, or, if available, use a commercial car wash that recycles water (most do).

<sup>1</sup> Certain water uses are not subject to mandatory restrictions, such as water used: for health or safety reasons; for the production of food and fiber; for the maintenance of livestock; to meet the core functions of a business (for example, irrigation by plant nurseries as necessary to maintain stock).

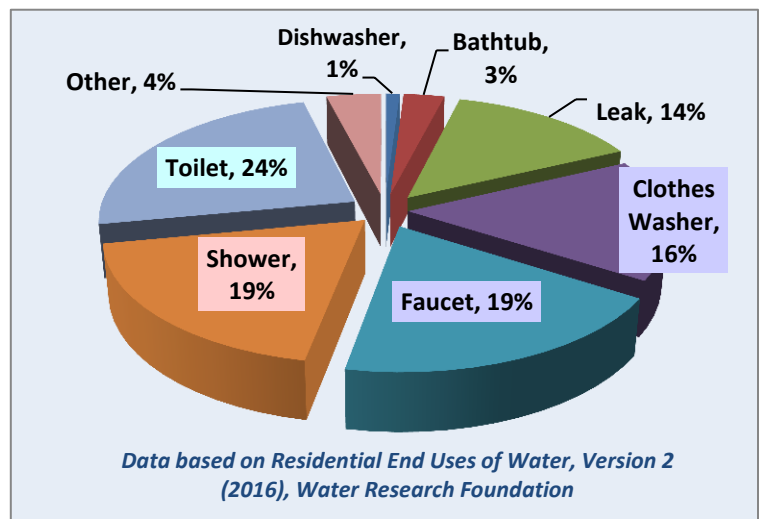
<sup>2</sup> Adapted from [Water-Smart Landscapes Start with WaterSense \(EPA WaterSense\)](#)

## INDOOR WATER USE

- 1) Take shorter showers (5 minutes or less) and use water-saving showerheads.
- 2) Wash only full loads of laundry and dishes.
- 3) Turn off water while brushing teeth or shaving. "Never Let the Water Run"
- 4) Fix leaks! Dripping faucets and leaking toilets, pipes, and appliances can add up to hundreds of gallons of water lost per week. (For guidance on finding and fixing common leaks, see "Don't Waste a Drop: Finding, Fixing and Preventing Indoor Water Leaks" at [http://www.ose.state.nm.us/FixALeak/add\\_info.php](http://www.ose.state.nm.us/FixALeak/add_info.php)).



- 5) Create a kitchen compost bin as an alternative to using the garbage disposal.
- 6) Choose high-efficiency plumbing products and appliances (look for the WaterSense label on plumbing products and the Energy Star label on appliances to find products that meet high standards for efficiency and performance).
- 7) Collect and reuse clean household water (water running while you wait for hot water to reach your faucet or shower; leftover water from steaming vegetables or boiling eggs, etc.) and use this to water plants.
- 8) Avoid using the toilet as a waste basket. Every flush you eliminate can save between 2 and 7 gallons of water.



Daily percent of indoor water use, per person, (sample: approx. 700 homes, nationwide)

## WATER CONSERVATION ON THE WEB

A list of native plants can be found in Appendix 1 of *More than just a yard: Ecological landscaping tools for Massachusetts homeowners* (EEA 2004). Available at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/eea/wrc/morethanjustyard.pdf>.

Greenscapes Massachusetts. Greenscapes Guide: Creating a beautiful healthy yard the natural way. Available for download at <http://greenscapes.org/>

Massachusetts Water Conservation Standards: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/wcs-2012>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, WaterSense Program: <https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/>

Alliance for Water Efficiency: <http://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/>