

To all La Canada Irrigation District Customers:

July 2008

Our water supply is under severe constraints due to recent limitations on the amount of water Metropolitan Water District, our primary source of water, may import. We are requesting all our customers to please conserve water indoors and out. Without voluntary conservation, we face the possibility of mandatory conservation and water allocation.

Locally, many water districts have enacted mandatory conservation statutes and ordinances. Coachella Valley and Eastern Municipal Water have enacted landscaping and irrigation rules. The city of Long Beach has water use prohibitions. Metropolitan Water District and its member agencies reduced supply to agricultural water users by 30%.

Water supply shortage is not just a local problem; it is statewide and affects agriculture the most. In nine central valley counties, a state of emergency has been declared due to water shortage: thousands of acres have been fallowed, crops may be abandoned and citrus trees have been uprooted. In Northern California, customers of East Bay Municipal Utility District (Oakland area) must decrease their consumption by 19% or pay steep drought surcharges.

Over-consumption and waste are squandering approximately 30 percent of the water we supply. This is because the financial incentive for our customers to conserve water has not been compelling. Therefore, we will be modifying our current rate structure to one that rigorously penalizes overconsumption and water waste. **Those who waste water cause higher water rates for all District customers.** We are asking all District residents to remind your friends and neighbors about the importance of conserving water. If you see leaks, irrigation water flowing down streets or gutters, or similar waste, please (gently) bring it to the attention of the resident, or call us at (818) 790-6749.

Thank you for your help. Following are many water saving ideas - you can often reduce your water consumption by 40% or more by making a few simple changes....

SAVING WATER OUTDOORS

Landscaping accounts for 50-70% of all residential water use and provides the best opportunity for water conservation at home.

1. Don't overwater your lawn. As a general rule, lawns only need watering every 2 to 4 days in the summer. Only water when your lawn is thirsty - overwatering promotes shallow root growth making your lawn less healthy and less drought-tolerant (To determine if your lawn needs to be watered, simply walk on it. If you leave footprints, it's time to water.)
2. As much as 30% of water can be lost to evaporation by watering during midday. Water after dusk and before 9:00 am. This reduces losses from evaporation..
3. Don't water your street, driveway or sidewalk. Position your sprinklers so that water lands on the lawn and shrubs - not the paved areas. Turn off the water immediately when runoff flows out of the intended area.
4. Install sprinklers that are the most water-efficient for each use. Micro and drip irrigation and soaker hoses are examples of water-efficient methods of irrigation. Avoid sprinklers that spray a fine mist, which increases evaporation.

5. Regularly check sprinkler systems and timing devices to be sure they are operating properly. Check sprinkler system valves periodically for leaks, and keep the heads in good repair. Install a rain sensor device which will override the irrigation cycle of the sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred..
6. Install a drip irrigation system for watering gardens, trees and shrubs. Drip irrigation provides a slow, steady trickle of water to plants at their roots through a network of small hidden hoses. The reduce overwatering, weed growth, and the time and labor involved in hand watering.
7. Raise the lawn mower blade to at least three inches. A lawn cut higher encourages roots to grow deeper, shades the root system and holds soil moisture better than a closely-clipped lawn.
8. Avoid over fertilizing your lawn. The application of fertilizers increases the need for water. Apply fertilizers that contain slow-release, water-insoluble forms of nitrogen.
9. Apply mulch to retain moisture in the soil. Mulching also helps to control weeds that use water needed by your plants.
10. Plant native and/or drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees. Once established, they do not need to be watered as frequently and they usually will survive a dry period without any watering. Group plants together based on similar water needs.
11. Don't use a hose to sweep your driveway or sidewalk - use a broom instead. Using a hose to clean a driveway can waste hundreds of gallons of water.
12. Install shut-off nozzles on all your outside hoses so that water flows only as needed. When finished, turn it off at the faucet instead of at the nozzle to avoid leaks.
13. Do not leave sprinklers or hoses unattended. Your garden hose can pour out 600 gallons or more in only a few hours, so don't leave the sprinkler running all day. Use a kitchen timer to remind yourself to turn it off. Better yet, purchase and install an inexpensive hose timer which will turn it on and off at preset times.
14. Promptly repair plumbing leaks.
15. If you wash your vehicles at home, park on the grass to do so.
16. Avoid the installation of ornamental water features (such as fountains) unless the water is recycled. Locate them in areas where there are minimal losses due to evaporation and wind drift.
17. If you have a swimming pool, install a water-saving pool filter. A single backflushing with a traditional filter can use 250 or more gallons of water. Cover your spa or pool to reduce evaporation. An average size pool left uncovered can lose as much as 1,000 gallons of water per month. Also, check your spa or pool for leaks and have them repaired promptly.

SAVING WATER INDOORS

1. Never put used water down the drain when there may be another use for it such as watering plants or cleaning.
2. Repair dripping faucets. If your faucet is dripping at the rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste 2,700 gallons per year which will add to the cost of water and sewer utilities, or strain your septic system.
3. Every time you flush a pre-1980's toilet, it's like pouring 10 large soft drink bottles down the drain. Replace old water-wasting toilets with newer water-saving models, or put a water displacement device such as a toilet dam or an early closure flapper valve inside your tank. You'll find both in the plumbing section of most hardware stores. Check for toilet tank leaks by adding a few drops of food coloring to the tank. If the flush valve is leaking, color will appear in the bowl within 30 minutes. (Flush as soon as test is done,

since food coloring may stain the tank.) Check the toilet for worn out, corroded or bent parts. Most replacement parts are inexpensive, readily available and easily installed.

4. Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects and other such waste in the trash instead of the toilet.
5. Take shorter showers. Replace your showerhead with a low-flow model (2.5 GPM or lower). Many of these allow you to cut off the water flow to soap up without adjusting the water temperature knobs.
6. Use the minimum amount of water needed for a bath by closing the drain first and filling the tub only 1/3 full. Stopper the tub before turning on the water. Adding hot water later can warm the initial burst of cold water.
7. Don't let water run while shaving or washing your face. Brush your teeth first while waiting for water to get hot, then wash or shave after filling the basin.
8. Install aerators with flow restrictors on all household faucets.
9. Operate automatic dishwashers and clothes washers only when they are fully loaded, or properly set the water level for the size of load you are washing.
10. When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water. Quickly rinse under a slow-moving stream from the faucet.
11. Store drinking water in the refrigerator rather than letting the tap run every time you want a cool glass of water.
12. Do not use running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods. Defrost food overnight in the refrigerator or by using the defrost setting on your microwave.
13. Kitchen garbage disposals require lots of water to operate properly. Start a compost pile as an alternate method of disposing food waste instead.
14. Consider installing an instant water heater on your kitchen sink so you don't have to let the water run while it heats up. This will not only save water, but also reduce heating costs for your household.
15. Insulate your water pipes. You'll get hot water faster plus avoid wasting water while it heats up.
16. Use water softening systems only when necessary. Save water and salt by running the minimum number of regenerations necessary to maintain water softness. Turn softeners off while on vacation.

THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT WATER

- ✓ All the water that has ever been, or will ever be on the Earth is here now. Only 1% of it is useable for human consumption.
- ✓ **All the water that was easy to get and inexpensive is gone.** It was used by previous generations and returned to the environment in one form or another. All future water needed for human consumption will be more difficult to get, more expensive, or both.