

Cutting Down Water Usage

Water — also referred to as liquid gold — is a precious commodity and shouldn't be taken for granted. The District strives to educate its customers on how to take advantage of this commodity while conserving it at the same time. Saving water doesn't have to feel like a dreaded chore — we'll show you how to make water conservation an easy every-day routine. Here are some simple tips on how to conserve at home.

Inside Your Home

Shower

- Install a low-flow showerhead.
- Turn the water off while you soap up in the shower.
- Shorten your showers by a few minutes.



Toilet

- Install ultra-low-flush toilets that use 1.6 gallons per flush versus standard toilets which use 3.5 to 6 gallons.
- Tune up your leaky toilets — the number one water waster in your home. One leaky toilet can waste up to 78,000 gallons of water in one year — enough to fill a swimming pool.

Brushing Teeth

- Turn the faucet off while brushing your teeth.

Washing Machine/Dishwasher

- Wash only full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher.

Kitchen

- Capture tap water in a watering can while waiting for hot water. Use this water for houseplants.
- Use the garbage disposal less and the garbage can more.

Outside Your Home

Lawn

- Water your lawn only when necessary. If you step on your grass and it springs back, it doesn't need water. Adjust your sprinklers accordingly.

Sidewalks/Driveways

- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your sidewalk or driveway.
- Adjust your sprinklers so they don't water the sidewalk or driveway.

Alternate Groundcover

- Many shrubs, trees and groundcovers utilize less water than grass. Landscape with drought — tolerant plants to save water each month.

Washing Your Car

- Wash your car with a bucket and a hose equipped with a shut-off nozzle, or at a commercial carwash that recycles its water.



Drip Irrigation vs. Automatic Sprinklers

- Utilize a drip irrigation system when possible and try to group plants together that all require the same amount of water. Adjust your automatic sprinklers according to the season. Have them go off more frequently in the spring and summer and less frequently in the fall and winter.



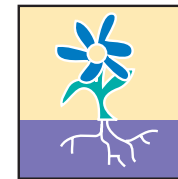
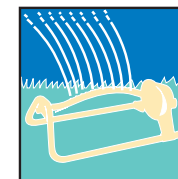
Santa Margarita Water District

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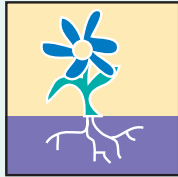
WATER CONSERVATION



Santa Margarita
Water District

Why is it so important to save water?

How will a drought affect you and your family? If you have never asked yourself this question, maybe you should. Santa Margarita Water District's customers live in a semi-arid desert region, where droughts remain a constant threat. When the inevitable droughts come, they not only affect water usage by customers, but usually result in rate increases as well. Despite Herculean efforts to provide abundant water to our rapidly growing region, water supply will be limited during a prolonged drought.



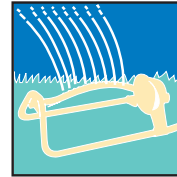
California places an extreme demand on water from Northern California and the Colorado River. Potential overdrafting and pollution could threaten Southern California's extremely valuable ground water resources. These factors, combined with an increasing population, make finding the best and most efficient use of water a necessity for Southern California. Let's all learn to make water conservation an everyday habit in our lives. Be proactive and help save water now to reduce the effects of a drought in the future. And remember, reducing water use outside your home also reduces urban runoff and protects stream and beach water quality as well.

Water Conservation Programs

There are two types of water conservation programs. The first is a voluntary program designed to reduce user cost. The second is a mandatory program brought on by a water shortage or drought. Because water is so vital and valuable, all customers should try to take part in a voluntary conservation program that works for them.

Voluntary

The first step in reducing water cost is the ability to reduce water consumption, including domestic and irrigation use. The majority of water utilized in a residential single-family home is for irrigation, which is an easy area to conserve water.



To learn more about how you can water your yard and still cut down consumption and cost, visit your local nursery or landscape designer for information on irrigation systems and drought-tolerant landscaping. SMWD also hosts free conservation workshops to teach customers about drought-tolerant plants and water wise landscaping. Call the District at 949/459-6400 for more information.

Living in Southern California, we can expect to experience another drought situation in the future. If every SMWD customer pitches in and takes part in a voluntary conservation program before a drought hits, there will be more water for customers to enjoy for years to come.

Mandatory

The last mandatory conservation program was in 1991. Due to multiple years of below average rainfall in Northern California and the Colorado River Watershed, SMWD was required to reduce its water importation from the Metropolitan Water District (MWD).

The District purchases and imports 95 percent of its water from MWD, which delivers it from Northern California and the Colorado River. When a drought impacts either of these two areas, there is the potential for mandatory conservation programs to be put in place. Since 1991, MWD has increased its storage capacity, nearly 10-fold, but we are still likely to face mandatory conservation at sometime in the future. During mandatory drought restrictions, SMWD may restrict the use of water that is deemed wasteful (i.e. washing down sidewalks, washing cars or street cleaning).

SMWD has a tiered rate system that imposes higher rates on customers who use excessive amounts of water. If the District notices a customer's water usage has increased significantly or if a customer feels like their water bill is extremely high, the District will inspect their water meter to make sure there isn't a leak. A more extensive audit also can be performed where a District representative will visit a customer's home and conduct a thorough review of their water meter, water pressure and irrigation habits. If the District notices signs of water misuse during an audit, it will give recommendations on how to conserve water and reduce their water bill.

Be water wise, conserve our supplies.