Water-Saving Strategies

Indoors
- Never pour water down the drain when there is another use for it, like watering plants or cleaning
- Verify that your home is leak-free. Read your water meter before and after a two-hour interval when no water is used. If the meter readings are different, you have a leak
- A leaky toilet can waste up to 200 gallons a day. Check the toilet for leaks by adding food coloring to the tank. If there is a leak, the color will appear in the bowl in 30 minutes. Flush as soon as the test is done, because food color can stain the tank
- Store drinking water in the refrigerator—don’t let the tap run while waiting for cool water to flow
- When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water. Once you have several pieces ready to rinse, quickly rinse under a slow-moving stream from the faucet
- Wash fruits and vegetables in a pan or water instead of running water from the tap
- Take a 5-minute shower instead of a bath and save up to 50 gallons. A full bathtub requires 70 gallons of water, but a 5-minute shower uses 10-22 gallons, depending on the showerhead and the water pressure
- Repair or replace dripping faucets. A faucet dripping at the rate of one drop/second will waste 2700 gallons per year
- When it’s time to replace your washing machine, consider ENERGY STAR models to save water and electricity
- Use a compost pile instead of the garbage disposal for most kitchen waste to save water and cut down on septic tank problems
- Match the water level to the amount of laundry in the load
- If your toilet was installed before 1992, reduce the amount of water used for each flush by installing a displacement device

Outdoors
- Don’t overwater your lawn. As a general rule, lawns need water every 5-7 days in summer and 10-14 days in winter
- To reduce loss from evaporation, water early in the morning. Some sources suggest evening watering for the same reason, but this practice promotes lawn diseases
- Use drought-tolerant plants in the landscape
- Avoid over-fertilizing the lawn—fertilizer applications increase the need for water
- Use a broom instead of the water hose to clean sidewalks and driveways and save 150 gallons of water each time
- Set the lawn mower height to 3 inches or more. The taller grass will shade the soil and reduce water loss from the root zone

Home Water Use

“Looking at the history of oil booms and busts, our research indicates that today’s oil crisis may foreshadow a looming water crisis. If we continue to use water at the current rate, a US General Accounting Survey Report indicates that 36 states, including Oklahoma, should expect local, regional or state-wide water shortages in the next five years.”

US Faces Era of Water Scarcity
Circle of Blue

GO GREEN!!!

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Reduce Packaging
- When choosing between similar products, select the one with the least packaging
- Consider large sized items for products that are used frequently—they generally have less packaging per unit of product

Reduce Waste Toxicity
- Use the least hazardous components to accomplish the task at hand
- Learn about alternatives to household items containing hazardous substances
- If you need to use a product with hazardous components, buy only what you need and share or donate any left product or take them to a Household Hazardous Waste Collection location

Consider Reusable Products
- Disposable plates, cups, napkins, paper towels, etc. are handy, but for everyday use, remember that washing dishes and dishtowels has less of an environmental impact than putting disposable products in a landfill
- Use refillable containers—fill a reusable water bottle from the tap rather than buying bottled water
- Use re-chargeable batteries
- Use some of the washable fabric in your “stash” to make reusable shopping bags

Choose Recyclable Products (and recycle them)
- Consider products made of materials that are collected for recycling locally
- Participate in community recycling drives and drop-off collections
- If your community does not have a recycling program, help establish one
- Take advantage of collection opportunities—for example many grocery and variety stores collect bags for recycling
- Use products with recycled content, choosing items with the largest percentage of recycled content

Source: Environmental Protection Agency
The GO GREEN!!! Challenge

4-H and OHCE members across Oklahoma invite you to be a part of the GO GREEN!!! Challenge. This project is based on making small behavior changes at home, tracking those changes and showing the community how a small group dedicated people can make a difference.

GO GREEN!!! Challenge participants make a commitment to record their use of water, energy and resources now and again in three to six months. Members of 4-H and other youth groups will apply math skills as they calculate the savings from their behavior changes. Adults should see a decrease in energy and water consumption and as well as the amount of trash that goes to the curb.

To join the GO GREEN!!! Challenge, contact the local OSU Extension Office for more information and copies of the survey or to have a 4-H or OHCE member present a program for your group.

Eco-friendly Travel Tips

At hotels...
- Resist the temptation to take a long shower or run a full tub of bathwater
- Let housekeeping staff know it is not necessary to change sheets & towels every day
- Leave unopened bottles of complimentary shampoo, lotion, etc. in the room, and take opened ones with you for the next trip
- Use electronic check-out if available to reduce paperwork

On the Road...
- Take only the maps and brochures that you need
- Reduce fast-food waste and carryout packaging—if you don’t need a sack, don’t take one. If you accidentally pick up too many ketchup packets or napkins, save them for the next trip
- If the nearest trash bin is full, don’t toss your trash beside it—hold onto it until you can dispose of it properly
- When it comes to trash, remember that you can take it with you. Set an example and pick up at least one piece of litter every day

Quick Facts

The average home contains more chemicals than an early 20th-century chemistry laboratory.

An average automatic dishwasher can use more than 10.5 gallons of water per cycle; an efficient model uses half that.

Every ten of paper recycled saves 60 percent of the energy, 17 trees, 7,000 gallons of water, and 60 pounds of air pollution.

Reducing Unwanted Mail

Each year, millions of Americans make one or more purchases through the mail. When you make these purchases, your name is often added to a list and marketed to other companies that do business through the mail. While you may enjoy the catalogs you receive, if you would like to receive less national advertising, you can ask companies not to share their names with other mailers or you can contact Mail Preference Service. Fill out the online form at this web address https://www.dmaschoice.org/dma/member/register.action or write them at this address:

Mail Preference Service
Direct Marketing Association
PO Box 282
Carmel, NY 10512

If you register by mail, include a $1 check or money order (to cover processing), payable to Direct Marketing Association.

Source: Environmental Protection Agency

Quick Tips

- Install a programmable thermostat
- Use compact fluorescent light bulbs with ENERGY STAR labels
- Air dry dishes instead of using your dishwasher’s drying cycle
- Plug home electronics, such as TV’s and DVD players into power strips and turn the power strips off when the equipment is not in use
- Lower the thermostat on your hot water heater to 120°F
- Take short showers instead of baths
- Wash only full loads of clothes
- Drive sensibly. Aggressive driving (speeding, rapid acceleration and braking) wastes gasoline
- When it’s time to replace appliances, look for the ENERGY STAR label.

Source: US Department of Energy