

Water and Energy Conservation Tips



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Alamo Title

Ways to Conserve Water

Kitchen

- Install aerators - free to Austin and San Marcos residents - on faucets (also in baths).
- Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator rather than waiting for cool water from the tap.
- Wash vegetables in a bowl of water rather than in running water.

Bathroom

- Capture warm-up shower water in a bucket for plants.
- Do not use the toilet as a trash can.
- Replace older toilets with low-flow models.
- Install water-saving showerheads which are free to Austin and San Marcos residents.
- Put food coloring in the toilet tank to check for slow leaks. Repair if necessary.
- Turn off the water while you brush your teeth, lather your hands, shampoo or shave.

In the laundry

- Install a tankless water heater.
- Lower the thermostat on a traditional water heater to 120 degrees.
- Replace a top-load washing machine with a front-load one.
- Operate washing machine fully loaded or on the appropriate setting for the load size.
- Insulate water heater and pipes according to manufacturers' directions.

In the yard

- Place plants w/similar watering needs together.
- Landscape with native plants accustomed to our dry climate.
- Water in the early morning and only when necessary.
- Track rainfall with a gauge to set a good watering schedule.
- Hand-water garden beds and lawn with a hose when possible.
- Use mulch on flower beds to retain moisture.
- Capture rain in a barrel for irrigation.
- Make sure every hose has a shutoff nozzle.
- Only install fountains or water features that use recycled water.
- Aerate your lawn and leave clippings on lawn.
- Select smaller bedding plants that require less water to become established.
- To reduce evaporation, cover a swimming pool when not in use

In general

- Report water waste from malfunctioning irrigation systems (in Austin, call 974-2199).
- Wash your car on the grass.
- Fix leaky faucets.
- Use porous materials for driveways and sidewalks to discourage runoff.
- Track your water usage on your bill and meter.

Numbers that hold water

8,500 gallons: average monthly single-family water use in Austin

350 gallons to 600 gallons: the amount of water wasted by a leaking toilet per month

5 minutes: the ideal time a shower should take

4 gallons: amount of water per minute saved if you turn off the water while brushing teeth

20 gallons: amount of water per load saved by a new front-loading washing machine

7 years: age of a water heater when you should shop for a new one

Sources: Agriculture Program of the Texas A&M University System's 'Efficient Use of Water

Ways to Conserve Energy

Air Conditioning/Heat

- Clean or replace AC filters at least once a month.
- Shade outside air conditioning units.
- Clean your AC's condenser/evaporator coils at the beginning of the season.
- Keep debris and high grass away from the AC condenser.
- Set your thermostat at 78 in the summer and 68 in the winter.
- If you have central air conditioning, do not close vents in unused rooms.
- Consider new high efficiency air conditioners and heat pumps.

Water Heater

- Lower the thermostat to 120 degrees and wrap with an insulation blanket.
- Turn down or shut off your water heater when you will be away for extended periods.

Lighting

- Turn off unneeded lights, even when leaving a room for a short time.
- Consider fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs.
- Clean lampshades and light bulbs. Dust can reduce lighting levels by as much as 50%.

Refrigerators and Freezers

- Consider an energy efficient refrigerator.
- Side-by-side refrigerators use about 45% more energy than ones with a freezer on top.
- Upright freezers use 10% to 25% more energy than chest styled freezers.
- Make sure your refrigerator and freezer doors seal properly.
- Defrost (manual) freezers before the frost exceeds a quarter inch thick.
- Let foods cool before placing in refrigerator unless the recipe specifies otherwise.
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator rather than on a counter top.
- Freezers work better fully loaded.

Clothes Dryers

- Dry loads of clothes back to back. Clean the lint filter after every load.
- Close the door to the dryer room. To keep from heating up the house.

Other Appliances

- Unplug seldom-used appliances such as extra tv's, video tape players and computers when not in use. Even off, they continue to draw as much as 10 watts of electricity.
- Consider a laptop computer, they use significantly less energy than desktop models.

Home Weatherization

- Check your insulation. A home with inadequate attic insulation can lose as much as 40% of its cool air. Because heat rises, as much as 60% of heat can be lost in the winter time in poorly insulated homes.
- Seal Leaking ducts. Ducts in the attic of the average 10 to 15 year old home leak 15% to 25% of its heating and cooling. Leaking ducts can also affect air quality in your home by sucking in and redistributing pesticides, fiberglass fibers and dust.
- Consider low energy windows.
- Consider storm windows and doors.
- Keep blinds and drapes closed.
- Tint windows. Applied to windows, tint can block out 40% to 60% of sunshine/heat.
- Consider solar screens, they can block out 60% to 70% of sunlight/heat.
- Caulk to stop leaks.

Recycling Resources

Computers

Recycle or donate your old computers to a good cause.

Goodwill Computer Works, 1015 Norwood Park Blvd. 637-7501, www.austincomputerworks.org. Accepts all types of electronics at no charge. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sundays.

Round2 Technologies, 6301 E. Stassney Lane. 342-8855, www.round2.net. Accepts all types of electronics for a charge of 25 cents per pound. 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays.

Axcess Technologies, 4801 Freidrich Lane, Building 1, Suite 100. 441-1100. Accepts electronics for recycling at no charge. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays

Televisions

Earth Protection Systems, 3916 Gattis School Road, Round Rock. 251-4691. Accepts television sets (and other electronics) for a fee of 35 cents per pound; Sony products are accepted free of charge. 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays, 8 a.m. to noon Fridays.

Goodwill Computer Works, 1015 Norwood Park Blvd. 637-7501, www.austincomputerworks.org. Accepts television sets free of charge.

Round2 Technologies, 6301 E. Stassney Lane. 342-8855, www.round2.net. Accepts television sets for a fee of 25 cents per pound.

Cell phones

It's important to donate or recycle cell phones, as they might contain pollutants such as flame retardants, lead and mercury, and, if you donate a phone, someone in need can use it to dial 911 after your service has been stopped.

To erase the data on your phone, visit www.recellular.com/recycling/data_eraser to download model-specific, step-by-step instructions.

Megabyte Express, 6500 Burnet Road

SafePlace, 1515 Grove Blvd., Building D. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesdays-Fridays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesdays.

Cell Phones for Soldiers, www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com, any AT&T store

Eyeglasses

The Lion's Club places eyeglass donation boxes in various locations. For a complete list and information on how to get a box, visit www.statesman.com/lifeguide.

Central Presbyterian Church, 200 E. Eighth St.

Senior Activity Center, 2874 Shoal Crest Ave.

All LensCrafters locations, including 2901 S. Capital of Texas Highway (Loop 360)

Phone Books

Ecology Action, Ninth Street and Interstate 35 (southbound access road)

Magazines

Community clinic waiting rooms, hospitals, area schools

Ecology Action, 707 E. Ninth St.

City of Austin curbside recycling

Fabric

University Medical Center at Brackenridge Volunteer Services Office, 601 E. 15th St. 324-7584. Accepts donations of cotton or flannel fabric to make blankets and pillows for patients.

The Senior Mitzvah Knitters of the Jewish Community Association of Austin accept donations of four-ply yarn to make baby blankets for the children's hospital and other projects. Contact Lisa Quay, 735-8086 or lisa.quay@shalomaustin.org.

Ink jet cartridges

Ecology Action, 707 E. Ninth St.

Megabyte Express, 6500 Burnet Road. 452-8855. Helps groups like the Humane Society raise money through cartridge recycling.

Compact fluorescent light bulbs

City of Austin Hazardous Waste Facility, 2514 Business Center Drive

IKEA, 1 IKEA Way, Round Rock. Accepts CFL bulbs

Pill bottles

Bethany United Methodist Church, 10010 Anderson Mill Road. 258-6017. Accepting donations of pill bottles, labels removed, to send to a clinic in Mogadishu, Somalia. Drop off donations in the church office from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays.

Plastic bags

H-E-B's plastic-bag recycling program accepts grocery bags, produce bags (must be clean with no labels), bags from the dry cleaner, newspaper bags and the plastic shrink wrap that surrounds paper towels, toilet paper, etc. Recycling stations are available at all H-E-B and Central Market stores, including 1000 E. 41st St. and 4001 N. Lamar Blvd.

Randalls, all locations including 2025 W. Ben White Blvd. and 715 S. Exposition Blvd.

Whole Foods, all locations including 525 N. Lamar Blvd.

Plastic bottles and containers

Be sure to remove the caps from bottles.

City of Austin curbside recycling for No. 1 and No. 2 plastic bottles only

Cycled plastics, 10200 McKalla Place. 339-8787. Drop off from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays. Also accepts plastic bags and No. 2 HDPE flowerpots that have been cleaned.

Ecology Action, Ninth Street and Interstate 35 (southbound access road), accepts plastic containers (Nos. 1-7) for recycling. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends.

Paint, motor oil, cleaning products

City of Austin Hazardous Waste Facility, 2514 Business Center Drive. The facility is open from noon to 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays and from 7 a.m. to noon the first Saturday of each month. For directions and more information on what is accepted, visit the Solid Waste Services Web site at www.ci.austin.tx.us/sws.

Cardboard

City of Austin curbside recycling accepts corrugated cardboard.

Ecology Action, Ninth Street and Interstate 35 (southbound access road), accepts corrugated and paperboard for recycling. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends.

Refrigerator Recycling

Austin Energy offers a cash incentive for your old 14-to-27 cubic feet refrigerator/freezer. We will even pick it up for free and dispose of it in an environmentally-sound way. (Note: The unit must be in working condition.)

Turn in your old refrigerator/freezer to receive: \$50 per unit—single-family home customers
\$35 per unit—apartment communities with 4 or more dwellings

Free! Free! Free!

* City of Austin customers can pick up free water-efficient showerheads (flow rate of 2 gallons per minute) and faucet aerators (which maintain pressure with less water) for the kitchen (2.2 gallons per minute) and bath (1 gallon per minute) during business hours at 625 E. 10th St., Suite 615. Free hose timers to prevent overwatering your lawn are also available (one per household). Call 974-2199 for details.

* City of San Marcos utility customers can pick up free water-efficient showerheads and kitchen and bath faucet aerators during business hours at 630 E. Hopkins St. (512) 393-8010.

Harvest the rain

City of Austin utility customers can purchase a rain barrel (\$60) to be used for irrigation purposes. For more information, applications and a list of rain barrel suppliers, visit www.waterwiseaustin.org or call 974-2199. Rebates (\$30) are available for approved rain barrels not purchased from the city.

Resources outside Austin

In addition to your town's recycling program, Ecology Action has centers in Manor (7811 Burleson-Manor Road next to the police station. 854-9721), Bertram (24-hour station at the water tower near the Church of Christ) and Cedar Park (2665 Whitestone Blvd.; this facility sometimes closes due to overflow). For directions and more information about each location, visit www.ecologyaction.org

The Williamson County Recycling Center. (512) 846-2756. Accepts used oil, scrap metal, including washed tin cans, cardboard, newspaper, aluminum, cell phones, plastic and e-waste, including computers, monitors, keyboards and cables. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, 8 a.m. to noon Saturdays.

