

# We Know...

## Water Quality and Conservation



Saving water – and money – can be fairly simple for homeowners. For example, older toilets can use up to 20 gallons of water per person each day. Replacing an old toilet can save an average household 8,000 to 22,000 gallons of water in a single year.

### **Consider more tips to conserve water and lower monthly bills:**

- Approximately 20 percent of toilets leak. Check for leaks by placing a few drops of food coloring in the tank. If dye shows up in the bowl after 15 minutes, the toilet has a leak. For an inexpensive solution, replace the flapper.
- Place one or two 1-quart bottles filled with water in the tank of an older toilet. It could save as much as 1,000 gallons of water per person in a year.
- Install an ultralow-flow toilet. It uses just 1.6 gallons a flush, compared to older toilets that use 3.5 to 7 gallons per flush.
- Repair leaks in shower and sink faucets.
- Test your shower flow. If a 1-gallon bucket placed under the flow takes less than 20 seconds to fill, install a low-flow showerhead, which uses less than 2.5 gallons per minute.
- Turn off water when shaving or brushing your teeth. It will save an average of 5 gallons per person every day.

## Be a 'Clean Water Neighbor'

You may not often think of it, but storm drains flow to nearby waterways. Everything that washes down a storm drain winds up in the local lake, river, creek, or stream.

Here are some simple ideas that will help you be a Clean Water Neighbor:

- Never use storm drains to dispose of waste items.
- Clean up leaves or grass clippings that accumulate on your driveway, sidewalk, or in the street.
- Sweep (don't wash) fertilizer and soil off driveways and walkways.
- Minimize the use of salt on sidewalks and driveways during winter.
- Flush or bury pet waste.
- Redirect downspouts away from paved areas to vegetated areas.
- Wash your car on the lawn, not on the driveway or street.
- Use recycling and composting sites in your community.

Keep these common wastes from reaching storm drains:

- motor oil
- antifreeze
- soaps
- pesticides
- fertilizers
- cleaning fluids
- paint
- pet waste

Rain and melting snow can wash soil, litter, pet wastes, fertilizer, leaves, and grass clippings off the pavement and into the storm drain. When the storm drain empties into lakes and streams, the pollutants washed into the water can kill fish and increase weed and algae growth.

For more information on water quality and conservation, contact your local K-State Research and Extension office or visit us online at [www.oznet.ksu.edu/WeKnow](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/WeKnow)



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