Every Drop Counts.

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Even if the savings are small,
every drop counts.**

City of Amarillo
Guide to Water Conservation

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Water is a precious resource in the Texas Panhandle.

Conserving water is the most effective and environmentally sound way to protect our water supply. The City of Amarillo consistently works to secure additional water rights so that there will be water for generations to come. However, because a portion of the water that the City uses comes from Lake Meredith, the recent lack of rainfall directly affects water levels in the lake which, in turn, affects our water supply.

Due to continued drought, it is important that water conservation measures be taken to protect our natural resources. This guide contains information on how you and your family can conserve water both in and outdoors.

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Amarillo Water Facts: Inspiration to Conserve Water

- There are about **67,000** water meters in Amarillo at homes and businesses.
- The primary use of the City's water supply during the spring and summer months is for irrigation and landscaping.
- Implementing water conservation measures can have a beneficial impact on the City's water supply.
- The City's water is supplied from two sources: **Lake Meredith** and a system of wells drawing groundwater from the **Ogallala Aquifer**.
- Lake Meredith is **dependent on rainfall** and snow melt to replace the water used by the City.
- Water removed from the Ogallala **cannot be replenished nearly as rapidly as it is withdrawn.**
- The average annual rainfall in the Amarillo area is about **20 inches**. Ours is considered a semi-desert area.
- Lake Meredith's water level, one of the primary sources of Amarillo's water. Each year the City of Amarillo receives an **allocation** or a certain amount of water that may be used from Lake Meredith.
- The 2007 average daily consumption of the City's water supply was 41.45 million gallons per day. The peak daily use for 2007 was 74.2 million gallons.
- **If dry conditions and water usage continues at the current rate, the City of Amarillo may be forced to implement a mandatory water conservation program. However, the City's goal is for Amarillo residents to begin voluntary water conservation measures now, to avoid the City being forced to enact mandatory water use restrictions in the future.**

The City of Amarillo is doing its share to conserve water

- The City of Amarillo Parks Department began a water conservation program in 2002. The program is saving an average of 112 million gallons of water each year.
- Computer-controlled irrigation systems have been installed for more efficient watering of the City parks facilities.
- Athletic fields and parks are being re-seeded with warm-season grasses that require less water.
- Xeriscaping and native plants that require less water are also being planted in City parks.
- Where possible, the irrigation of City parks has been shifted from City of Amarillo drinking water to well water sources.
- Watering of over 1,000 acres of irrigated City parkland has been reduced by 30% resulting in a savings of more than three million gallons per day.
- Fire hydrant flushing and testing by the Amarillo Fire Department is suspended during high water demand periods.
- City Utilities Division continues an aggressive program of monitoring problematic water lines to avoid leaks.
- Over 15 million gallsons per day of City wastewater effluent is being used by our local electric utility company in applications that previously used drinking water.
- **All of these conservation efforts together have reduced the City's daily water usage by more than five million gallons.**

Remember, you are the key to conserving water and you can make a difference by taking simple steps each day.

Steps you should take to conserve water: indoors

- Turn off the water while you brush your teeth or shave.
- Water plants with leftover dish or bath water or ice.
- Fix leaky faucets and pipes.
- Install water-efficient devices in the bathroom and kitchen.
- If you see a leaky plumbing fixture, notify the manager to please have it fixed.
- Use the sink garbage disposal sparingly or start a compost pile.
- Always keep water conservation in mind and find ways to save in the kitchen. Small savings add up in time.
- Take a shower instead of filling the tub and taking a bath. Showers with low-flow showerheads usually use less water than tub baths.
- If you do take baths, try reducing the level of the water being used in a bathtub by one or two inches.

Steps you should take to conserve water: outdoors

- **Implement your own voluntary water conservation program by reducing residential outdoor watering to twice per week. This conservation measure alone will have the most significant impact on water usage.**
- Use a broom, not a hose, to remove debris from sidewalks, patios and driveways.
- Drain water from pools and hot tubs onto vegetated areas, not in the gutter.
- Fix leaky hoses and faucets.
- Use hoses and sprinkler heads that drip water slowly close to the ground.
- Let the City Utilities Office know when you see wasteful usage outdoors that occurs on a regular basis (see back cover for phone numbers).
- Use a bucket of soapy water, not just the hose, to wash your car.
- Don't cut the grass too short — longer grass holds moisture better.
- Concrete won't grow — don't water your driveway, the sidewalks or streets.
- Don't over water — find out what types of plants you have and how much water they really need.
- There is more to yards than lawns. Use native and water-efficient plants and trees to create an enjoyable outdoor space.

For more information on conserving water, visit the City of Amarillo website at www.amarillo.gov and click on the "Every Drop Counts" icon.

Efficient Watering of Your Lawn

Two-thirds of Amarillo's water use in the spring and summer months result from residents watering their lawns and gardens. It's sad but true, homeowners waste roughly half of the water they use. One reason is that homeowners water their lawns and gardens inefficiently. Using these tips when watering your lawn and garden can result in measurable savings in water consumption.

When to Water

Appearance - Most grasses take on a dull, dark appearance and footprints are visible when it needs water.

Time of day - The optimal time to water is from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

When Not to Water

Guideline - Do not water when it is excessively windy, rainy or during the heat of the day (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

How Much to Water

Water depth - Usually applying 1 to 1 ½ inches of water to your lawn is adequate to wet the soil to a depth of 4 to 6 inches.

How Often to Water

By the type of grass - Locate your type of grass in the table on page nine of this guide to determine how often to water during summer months (June, July and August). Subtract any rainfall from the amount of water needed each week.

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Other considerations that affect watering

Fertilizer

A slow release nitrogen fertilizer helps plants use less water and a lawn fertilizer with a 3-1-2 ratio of N-P-K (N= nitrogen, P= phosphorus, K= potassium) such as 15-5-10 is recommended to help grass withstand stress. See the table on page nine of this booklet for the amount recommended by the type of turf. Fertilize lightly in the spring and again in early fall.

Sprinklers

Type - Use a sprinkler that emits large drops of water that remain close to the ground, not one that sprays fine mist into the air.

Flow - To determine the amount of water your sprinkler applies, use the following steps:

Step 1 - Set 3 to 5 empty cans at different distances from the sprinkler with the last can near the edge of sprinkler coverage.

Step 2 - Run the sprinkler for 30 minutes.

Step 3 - Add the inches of water in all cans and divide the total inches by the number of cans to obtain an average.

Step 4 - Multiply the average by 2 to determine how many inches of water are applied in 1 hour.

Prevent runoff

If runoff occurs before the desired amount of water is applied, turn off the water and allow it to soak in for 15 - 30 minutes. Continue the on-off cycle until the correct amount of water has been applied. To avoid runoff on sloping areas, place sprinklers near the top of the slope.

TURF GRASS CHARACTERISTICS

Grass Species	Water Requirement	How Often to Water (June, July, August)	Fertilizer Requirements lbs. N per 1000 sq.ft. per year	Shade Tolerance
Buffalograss[1]	low	Every 2-5 weeks	0 - 2	poor
Bermudagrass[2]	moderate	Every 7-10 days	2 - 5	poor
Centipede	moderate	Every 7-10 days	1 - 2	fair
Zoysia[2]	moderate	Every 7-10 days	2 - 5	good
Carpetgrass	high	Every 5 days	1 - 2	fair
Bluegrass	very high	Every 4 days	2 - 5	good
Tall Fescue	very high	Every 4 days	2 - 5	good

[1]Can survive on 10 to 20 inches of water per year.
[2]Can survive on 20 to 30 inches of water per year.

Source: *Texas Water Development Board*

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