

Water

Water is essential to life. We use it to grow food, to keep clean, to generate power and to stay alive. However, fresh water is being used faster than it can be naturally replenished; although Canada is one of the few water-rich countries in the world, our freshwater supplies are under threat from wasteful habits, pollution, climate change and mismanagement. It's important that we conserve and protect this natural resource in order to ensure its availability for generations to come.

You can reshape your water use by adopting one or more of these water-saving behaviours. Conserving water not only protects our ecosystems but can also save you money!

At Home

- **Tighten those taps.** Check pipes, taps and toilets for leaks. You can save as much as 50 litres of water a day by fixing a dripping tap.
- **Install water-saving aerators on all faucets**, if your faucets are threaded to accept them. Install aerators with a rated flow of 12.5 litres/minute or less.
- **Reduce your personal shower time.** Stick to the essentials in the shower and save the shaving and teeth-brushing for the sink. Try a "Navy" shower: get wet, turn the water off, soap up and turn the water on to rinse. Using a two-in-one shampoo-conditioner is another way to help you speed up your shower.
- **Use soap wisely.** The less soap used, the less chemical burden on our water and the less treatment necessary.
- **Avoid flushing expired or unused medication** down the toilet or sink to prevent contaminating the water supply. Instead, return them to the pharmacy or take them to a household hazardous waste depot in your municipality.

Did you know?

March 22 is World Water Day – the United Nations' international day to celebrate freshwater. Visit unwater.ca to learn more.

- **Storm drains are for rain.** Never pour paint, used oil or chemicals into your sink or wash them into the street or down a drain. Even soap can be harmful as most street drains flow directly into our rivers and streams. If you have usable leftover items, such as motor oil or paint, share them with family or neighbours. If they cannot be used by others, take them to an Eco Station or household hazardous waste round-up.
- **Use sand instead of salt** on driveways and walkways.
- **Ditch the garburators.** Putting food, shredded or whole, down the drain creates extra burden on our waste water treatment plants and often other chemicals or nutrients may enter the ecosystem unnecessarily.
- **Use tap water.** Our municipal tap water is well regulated, high quality and ready to use. Also, tap water is safer, cleaner, cheaper and creates less waste than purchasing bottled water. If you keep a jug of water in the fridge, you can get cold water without running the tap.

On Campus

- **Refill your reusable water bottle.** Hydration stations are installed in the Students' Union Building to make it easy for you to fill a reusable bottle. Save money on bottled water and reduce the amount of plastic that you add to the waste/recycling stream.
- **Use hand sanitizer.** For quick sanitation, a full hand wash using water is not needed and alcohol-based sanitizers might do the trick. They are found in bathrooms and other common areas.
- **Green your lab.** There are many ways to reduce water consumption in labs. Could you use tap water for the initial wash and distilled water for the rinse? This will save the energy involved with making distilled water. Could your lab invest in a waterless water bath?
- **Report a leak.** If you spot a leaky faucet, toilet or fixture in your residence or common areas, report it! Contact your building manager or call **780.492.4833**.

Did you know?

On North Campus, Triffo Hall collects rainwater in a below-grade storage tank system and uses it for toilet flushing to reduce potable water use.

- **Report a broken or badly aligned sprinkler head.** Sprinklers are sometimes in locations that are vulnerable to damage. The University of Alberta’s Grounds staff manages all of the landscapes on campus and seek to maximize their water efficiency. You can help by reporting any malfunctions you see to **780.492.4833**.
- **Share your ideas.** If you have a campus water conservation idea, share it with the Office of Sustainability by emailing **sustainability@ualberta.ca**.



Water at the U of A

Water conservation is important to the University of Alberta. Each building on campus is metered for water usage and measured on a monthly basis, and motion sensors and low-flow fixtures have been installed in newer buildings and retrofitted into older buildings.

Augustana Campus recently installed a 76.8 cubic metre rainwater tank to collect water that is used for campus irrigation.

