



Home Energy Check-up Information Sheet

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We all need to be aware of ways to reduce consumption and improve water efficiency to help maintain our supplies of drinking water.

Approx. 1kWh of electricity is required to deliver and dispose of each cubic metre of water that comes into our homes.

40% of the world's population experience serious water shortages.

Water charges will continue to rise and consumption is rising some 1% per year.

This is not sustainable. Much is said about energy saving and this should also include water saving

Top tips in no particular order:

- How much water do you use? Households not on a meter are charged according to rateable value. Unless you are a particularly heavy user it can often pay to have a water meter fitted (usually for free.) Ofwat have calculated that there are average savings of between 5 – 10% on water bills after the installation of a meter
- The average U.K. citizen uses 150 litres of water per day – much of which does not need to be of drinking quality; toilet flushing 30%, personal water, baths and taps 21%, clothes washing 13%, showers 12%, washing up 8%, outdoor use 7%, drinking 4% other 4%.
- If all your rainwater drains into a soak away or discharges straight onto the ground rather than going into the sewer water companies will offer a reduction on annual water rates but you will need to ask.
- If you have a septic tank and have no mains sewage connection, you don't have to pay sewage charges to the water company – though you may have septic tank emptying costs.
- Make full use of stored rainwater. Assuming an average floor area of 50m² and average annual rainfall of 800mm the average house in the Midlands in 2007 could have collected 40,000 litres of water for car washing, window cleaning, plant watering etc. If you use a hose pipe a lot, consider installing a submersible pump connected to the hose but be aware that many pumps will deliver up to 1200 litres per hour so a large storage tank should be considered.
- With new build properties, underground rainwater storage with facilities to use this water, suitably filtered for washing machines and toilet flushing is perfectly feasible. A standard toilet can use up to 13 litres of water per flush, modern dual flush systems use 6 litres for a full flush and four litres for a short flush.
- Low cost toilet flushing is perfectly possible. A £30 water butt sited near to your back door and two 90p buckets (colour co-ordinated to match the bathroom suite if you must) is all you need. Not quite so convenient but a staggering amount of drinking water can be saved this way.

- Push button dual flush toilet cistern as mentioned above will greatly reduce consumption but be aware that the valves on these systems sometimes stick and overflow into the toilet bowl un noticed.
- If you have a pre 2001 single flush cistern consider fitting a “save a flush bag” available free from Severn Trent Water or your local supplier. Alternatively install a water filled plastic bottle or even a brick!
- Don’t leave the tap running whilst cleaning your teeth, use a tooth mug. A running tap uses up to 6 litres a minute.
- Stop those drips – a dripping tap can waste up to 5000 litres a year costing £18.00
- Hand washing dishes typically uses 60 litres a session. A full modern dish washer uses only 15 litres.
- A bath can use over 100 litres, a shower one third of this though power showers, running for 5 minutes can use more than a bath.
- Re use bath water for watering the garden, but don’t store for long or use on vegetables or fruit.
- Try to run washing machines full. Half loads use more than half the water.
- Keep a jug of water to cool in the fridge rather than run the tap to get the water cool.
- Save cold run off from the hot tap and water used for boiling eggs etc.
- Know where your main stop valve is if you ever get a burst pipe.
- Wash fruit and vegetables in a bowl rather than under the tap then reuse the water.
- Don’t flush cotton wool etc. down the loo, bin it.
- Only fill the kettle with the amount you need to boil.
- Garden sprinklers can use up to 1000 litres an hour!!
- Water gardens in the evening, when it is cooler to reduce evaporation.
- A hose pipe can use up to 18 litres a minute – use a watering can to put the water exactly where you need it.
- Install water butts – they are often available at subsidised prices from water companies or local authorities.
- Use a bucket and sponge to wash the car – better still use rainwater.
- Mulch plants with a layer of up to 5 cm of bark chippings or even well rotted grass mowing’s to conserve water in the soil.
- A twice weekly soak is better for plants than daily watering – it encourages roots to grow deeper.
- Consider fitting a flow restrictor to shower heads
- Do you use more water washing your hands under a running tap or if you put the plug in?