

### **Drops Add Up**

60 drops per minute is  
190 to 260 gallons per month -

**Every Drop Counts!**

### **Other Ways to Reduce Water Use**

Water softener regeneration cycles can use from 32 to over 140 gallons of water. The actual amount used depends on the amount of hardness removed from the water, the programming of the softener, and the type of softener. Some models are more water efficient in their regeneration cycles. Regeneration cycles can be optimized by using water softeners with demand-initiated regeneration rather than those with set times for regeneration. Regeneration will occur only when required as determined by the gallons of water used, a change in the electrical conductivity of the resin bed, or a change in water hardness.

For more information, see University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extension sites [droughtresources.unl.edu](http://droughtresources.unl.edu) and [water.unl.edu](http://water.unl.edu)

For more water saving ideas, see the companion publications:

- **Make Every Drop Count On Your Lawn**
- **Make Every Drop Count In Your Landscape**

## **Drought**

Droughts are a normal part of life in the Great Plains and for Nebraska. Many droughts are short-term or only affect small areas, but multiple-year droughts like the Dust Bowl of the 1930s are relatively common as well. In 2012, the entire state of Nebraska experienced the driest summer in more than 50 years. Conserving water in your home, lawn, and landscape helps to reduce the impact of residential water demand on our natural resources.

Produced by University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extension  
in cooperation with:

Nebraska Department of Health & Human  
Services Regulation and Licensure  
Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality  
National Drought Mitigation Center  
Nebraska Department of Natural Resources  
Nebraska League of Municipalities  
Nebraska Rural Water Association  
Nebraska Well Drillers Association  
UNL Conservation and Survey Division

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

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**EXTENSION**

Know how. Know **now**.

# **Make Every Drop Count**

In Your Home



## To Make Every Drop Count in Your Home.

The toilet, shower/bath, and clothes washing machine account for about two-thirds of the water used in an average household.

### Toilet

- About 20% of toilets leak, wasting up to 200 or more gallons of water a day. Put a few drops of food dye in the tank. If after 15 minutes, color appears in the bowl, the toilet leaks and be repaired. Typically, the toilet flapper needs replacement or the water level adjusted.
- Reduce toilet flushes by not using them as waste paper baskets.
- Invest in a water-efficient toilet. Toilets manufactured prior to January 1, 1994 may use up to 5 or more gallons per flush. Newer toilets use 1.6 gallons per flush. Toilets with the WaterSense® label use 1.28 or less gallons per flush. Dual flush toilets use 0.8 gallons for liquids and 1.6 gallons for solid waste per flush.
- Toilet dams, 1.6 gallon flappers, or water-filled plastic containers can be installed in older toilet tanks but reduced flow can affect flushing. About 3 gallons of water may be needed in the tank to flush properly. Avoid bricks that crumble and affect operation.

### Clothes Washing Machine

- Adjust water levels to the laundry load size and soil.
- Wash fewer full loads instead of several small loads to use less total water.
- Consider a more water-efficient clothes washing machine. Older, standard machines might use 23 gallons per load. Those with an EnergyStar® label use about 15 gallons per load. When shopping, compare the amount of water used for the same tub capacity. Look for adjustable water level settings that allow you to choose the level for the load or that do so automatically.
- Horizontal axis (usually front loading) clothes washers have a history of being water efficient, although new features now make many top loaders water efficient.

### Dishwasher

- Replace an old dishwasher. Older dishwashers can use about 14 gallons of water per load. Newer, water-efficient models average 6 to 7 gallons per cycle. Those with an Energy Star® rating use only 4 gallons per cycle.
- Wash fewer full loads rather than several small loads. If small loads must be run, adjust the control setting for the load size and soil level.
- Scrape off excess food before loading rather than pre-rinsing items.

### Shower

- Replace older showerheads with newer water-efficient ones. Older showerheads can use 6 to 8 gallons per minute (gpm) fully opened. Showerheads manufactured since January 1, 1994 use no more than 2.5 gpm. Those with the WaterSense® label must use no more than 2.0 gpm.
- Take short showers. A quick shower usually draws less water than a bath.

### Faucet

- Shut off the water flow while lathering up, brushing teeth, shaving, or completing other similar tasks.
- Install water-efficient faucets. Standard faucets can use 3 to 5 gpm. More efficient kitchen and bathroom faucets use only 2 gpm. WaterSense® labeled faucets must not exceed 1.5 gpm.
- Repair leaky faucets, which can waste 10 to 20 gallons or more a day. Faucet repairs may be as simple as changing an inexpensive washer or O-ring.
- Install faucet aerators that break the flowing water into fine droplets and add air. They can reduce water use by as much as 60% while maintaining wetting effectiveness.