

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



Last year the Maryland area experienced a drought resulting in water restrictions being placed on much of central Maryland. Although restrictions have eased recently, this experience highlights the need to be conscious of how we use water and the importance of conserving water for future generations. Saving water is not only the right thing to do from an environmental standpoint, but also helps you as a customer save money - both in your quarterly utility bill and also by delaying the need for costly upgrades to existing infrastructure.

Saving water doesn't have to be expensive or complicated. Start by thinking about how you use water both inside and outside your home. Read the suggestions in this newsletter and you will soon realize that by making a few practical changes to your daily routine, you can easily save both water and money!

First Fix Toilet Leaks...

Leaks in your plumbing both inside and out are major water-wasters. These often silent culprits can waste between 15 to 100 gallons a day depending on the size of the leak. They also cost you money each day they go unfixed. According to the American Water Works Association, toilets account for 45 percent of all indoor water use and it is estimated that 20 percent of all toilets leak. Since Anne Arundel County meters are read and the resulting bills sent quarterly, a toilet leaking over that period of time can result in a huge loss of water and money. If you notice your bills creeping steadily higher, you hear the sound of water coming from your toilet long after flushing, or your toilet seems to flush by itself for no apparent reason, you could have a leak. Periodically checking your toilet to ensure it is operating properly is the best precaution.



Whereas some leaks are discovered from the sound of running water, others are silent and difficult to detect. To "flush out" these silent leaks, remove the toilet lid and put dye tablets or food coloring in the tank. Do not flush. If, after a half hour, colored water appears in the bowl, you have a leak.

Another easy leak test is to note the water level in the tank after flushing by making a pencil mark at the water line. After a few minutes, check the level. If it has dropped, you have a leak.

Other causes of toilet leaks include float arm not properly adjusted, float arm ball filling with water and faulty flapper valves. A flapper valve, also known as a flush valve ball, tank stopper or flapper ball, should be replaced every 3 to 5 years.

Another problem source can be the ballcock which is located inside the tank behind the flush handle. If the water stops running when the float ball rod is gently lifted, there may be a problem. Float balls occasionally need to be adjusted or replaced. They also can be easily repaired with replacement parts from your local hardware or home improvement store.

Faucet and Showerhead Leaks...

Dripping faucets can waste hundreds of gallons of water a day. Most leaks in household faucets and showerheads are caused by worn washers or "O" rings. All faucets, including those seldom used, should be checked periodically for leaks. To fix leaky faucets, turn off the water supply. Replace the washer. Turn the water supply line on again. This is a simple and easy way to save water and money.

Outside Faucets...

When checking for leaky faucets, don't forget to check for those outside your home. Outdoor faucets and hoses with leaks can waste thousands of gallons of water. Remember to turn off all outside faucets completely when not in use and repair those leaking. Also repair hoses leaking around the faucet connections which can be just as costly and wasteful.



Water Conservation starts with: USE WATER WISELY!



Easy Tips for the Bathroom

- Don't use the toilet for trash. Only flush when necessary and use a wastebasket for trash!
- Take shorter showers. Turn off the water while soaping up or shampooing your hair. Install low consumption showerheads.
- Fill the bathtub a third or half of what you usually use. Bathe small children together.
- When brushing your teeth, wet the brush, fill a glass for rinsing, then turn off the faucet.
- When shaving, fill the sink with a small amount of water for rinsing, then turn off the faucet.
- Take a shower with a bucket, then use the water your bucket catches to water your plants.

Easy Tips for the Kitchen and Laundry...

- When doing laundry, wash only full loads. Adjust your water level setting to the size of the load.
- Wash only full loads in the dishwasher. Adjust your wash setting to the type of load you are washing.
- When washing dishes by hand, don't leave the faucet running to rinse. Wash first, then rinse or rinse in a stoppered sink or

separate container.

- Rinse fruits and vegetables in a pan or stoppered sink, not under a running faucet.
- Keep a pitcher of cold water in your refrigerator for drinking instead of running the faucet until it gets cold.
- Do not use running water to defrost foods. Defrost overnight in the refrigerator or in the microwave.

*Striving for excellence,
while saving money...*

**Bureau of Utility Operations
EXCEL Program
Working for you**



In 1997, the Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works Bureau of Utility Operations created a joint labor and management program to help the agency become more efficient and cost effective by reorganizing and changing work practices. The program, Excellence in Cost Effective Leadership (EXCEL), has helped the Bureau reduce costs while maintaining environmentally sound water and wastewater services.

About the Program

The Steering Team, a joint labor and management team, was created to provide leadership and empowerment to employees so the agency can become more competitive while increasing the cost-effectiveness of its operations without resorting to layoffs or a reduction in the quality of service.

Through the EXCEL Program employee work teams were created to develop strategies for improvement that could be implemented by the Bureau. Key strategies for increasing effectiveness, productivity and participation of all employees have included implementing a flexible, multi-skilled workforce, providing intensive training to increase the skill level of employees, and moving to a team-based organizational structure while decreasing layers of management. Work teams are focused on reengineering the way they perform tasks, improving maintenance programs to maximize the life cycle of the Bureau's equipment, and using new technology to improve performance and efficiency while reducing the need for manpower.

Summary of Results

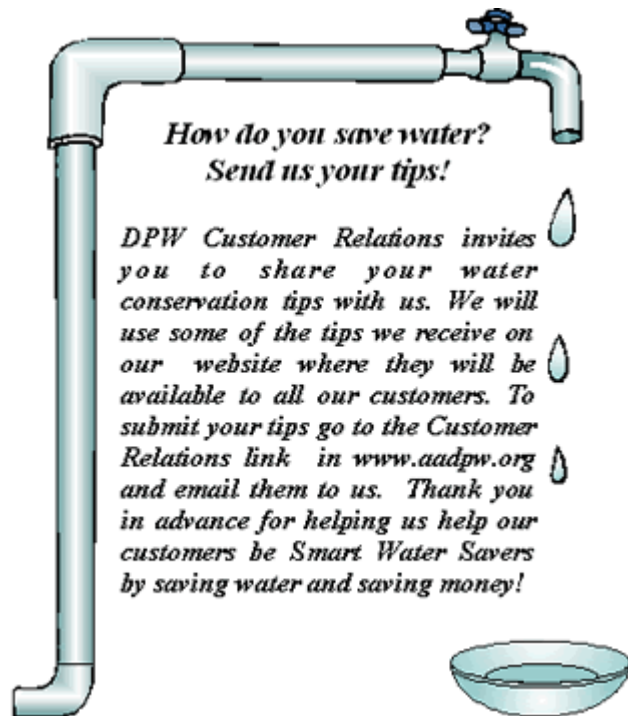
The results of the EXCEL Program have been tremendous for the Department of Public Works. Through reorganization and without any employee layoffs, the supervisory ratio went from 1 supervisor for 9 employees to 1 supervisor for 13 employees. Employees are undergoing extensive training to develop multiple skills in the fields of mechanical, electrical, instrumentation, safety, laboratory and operations as part of a program that increases efficiency and productivity by creating a more flexible workforce.

In addition, the cost savings realized has been significant. Since fiscal year 1999, the EXCEL Program has saved customers \$5 million by reducing staff through attrition and energy savings. The Bureau is currently saving an additional \$1 million annually

and that is only the beginning of the potential savings expected through the implementation of new strategies to improve the efficiency of the Bureau.



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**How do you save water?
Send us your tips!**

DPW Customer Relations invites you to share your water conservation tips with us. We will use some of the tips we receive on our website where they will be available to all our customers. To submit your tips go to the Customer Relations link in www.aadpw.org and email them to us. Thank you in advance for helping us help our customers be Smart Water Savers by saving water and saving money!

**Helpful Telephone Numbers for
The Department of Public Works**

24-hour EMERGENCY service for water and wastewater, solid waste (after 3:30 p.m.) ... 410-222-8400 South County... 410-451-4118

After 3:30 p.m., weekends and holiday EMERGENCY Service for stormdrains, roads, traffic lights/signs... 410-222-6120

For weekday EMERGENCIES (between 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.) involving stormdrains, roads, or traffic lights/signs, please call the appropriate district office. If you do not know what district to call, please call any of these Customer Relations numbers...

- Customer Relations... 410-222-7582
- General Information... 410-222-7500
- Billing Information... 410-222-1144
- Bulk Item Trash Service, Recycling Information, Trash Collection... 410-222-6100
- Northern Roads District... 410-222-6120
- Southern Roads District... 410-222-1933
- Central Road District...
- Crownsville Yard... 410-222-7940
- Central Road District...
- Odenton Yard... 410-222-6126

During snow emergencies (4" or more) customers in all roads districts please call...

410-222-4040

www.aadpw.org

www.aacounty.org



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