



# Fact sheet 13) Water wise

*Black Community Housing Service (QLD) Ltd. (BCHS) is committed to providing accessible and sustainable tenancy management and assistance services. We strive to provide access to affordable housing that will enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to position themselves to transition over time into long-term and mainstream housing markets. Providing support and assistance to clients in understanding and meeting their tenancy obligations is a subsequent priority, to support current and future housing, social and economic aspirations for Indigenous individuals and families.*

## What are some water saving tips?

While the last remaining water restrictions in South East Queensland were lifted on January 1, 2013, it is important that you are still careful and considerate of your water usage. Water is a precious resource and it is important not to waste it.

There are a number of ways that you can save water around the home. The following table provides some tips for being water wise in each area of your home.

**Table 1 – Water saving tips for the home**

<b>Part of the home</b>	<b>How to be more water wise</b>
<b>Toilet</b>	<p>Up to 16% of household water is flushed down the toilet. Unnecessary flushing of the toilet is one of the biggest contributors to water wastage.</p> <p>Try to not flush the toilet needlessly. Remember; do not flush items other than toilet paper down the toilet. Things like sanitary items can cause clogs and damage.</p> <p>If you have a dual flush toilet, try and use the half flush option. It will save you water.</p>
<b>Baths and basins</b>	<p>Try using a plug when washing your hands and face and remember to turn off the tap while you are brushing your teeth and shaving. Running water left on leads to a significant amount of water wastage.</p> <p>If you are using the bath, try to not over fill it. You should put the plug in before turning the water on to reduce water wastage as well.</p>
<b>Shower</b>	<p>It is important to remember that a standard shower can use 20L of water per minute. This means that long showers equate to</p>

	<p>significant water usage.</p> <p>Try taking shorter showers. They will not only save water, but also save on the energy associated with heating the water.</p> <p>You can check and make sure your hot water system's thermostat is not set too high. Adding cold water to reduce the temperature of the water wastes both water and energy.</p> <p>You can also try using a bucket to catch water while the shower warms up. You can then use this water on your garden.</p>
<b>Laundry</b>	<p>The laundry is a place that uses a lot of water, energy and detergents. Saving water in the laundry depends a lot on the type of washing machine you have.</p> <p>If you are looking for a new washing machine, try and select one that has a water rating of 4 stars or more. Usually, front loading machines have the highest water rating. They can also use up to 50% less water, 35% less detergent and 30% less energy than top loaders.</p> <p>Other tips that can help save you water and energy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try doing bigger and less regular loads of washing;</li> <li>• Pre-treat stains before you wash clothes. This reduces the risk of having to re-wash the item.</li> <li>• Try and have a designated spot for dirty clothes so they don't get confused with clean clothes. This can reduce your amount of washing.</li> <li>• If washing by hand, use only as much water as needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Kitchen</b>	<p>The kitchen is also a place of high water consumption.</p> <p>If you have a dishwasher, make sure you only activate a cycle when it is full. Scraping your plates before you put them in the dishwasher instead of rinsing them can also save you water. A running tap in the kitchen can use up to 15L of water per minute.</p> <p>If you hand wash your dishes, make sure you use a plug. If you have 2 sinks, fill the second with water to do your rinsing. This will save you from using running water.</p> <p>Another tip to consider is when rinsing fruit and vegetables, try and use a bowl or a plugged sink instead of running water.</p>
<b>Garden</b>	<p>Some careful planning and gardening habits can make a big difference to your water-usage outdoors.</p> <p>Some helpful hints to save water include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't over water your plants. Not only does this use excess water, but it can also waterlog your soil. This</li> </ul>

	<p>encourages growth of bacteria and fungi, which causes disease in plants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be sure to mulch generously. It can reduce water loss by up to 70%. It also helps improve your soil and reduce weeds.</li><li>• Try to compost food scraps. Compost enriches your soil by helping it both absorb and hold more water, in turn, resulting in less watering.</li></ul>
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## Can I check how much water I am using?

When looking to save water, it can be useful to know how much your household is already using. This can also help you set a new water usage target and be more water wise around the home.

To check how much water you are using you will need to check your water meter. Take a water meter reading and check it again in 7 days time. The difference between the two readings is your weekly water consumption. You can divide this amount by 7 to get a daily water usage reading.

## How do I check if there are leaks in the home?

There are a couple of ways to check if you have a leak in your home. This can be an important step to take in being more water wise, so that you are not losing excess and unnecessary water.

The first thing to do is to have a thorough look around the home to see if you observe any visible leaks or faulty connections. If you do identify any, it is important that you notify your lessor/ so that this can be fixed.

If your inspection of all water fixtures does not reveal any visible leaks, you can run a quick test using your water metre to make sure there are no concealed problems.

To do this, take a water reading. Write down both the black and red digits from left to right. Once you have done this, do not use any water in the home for at least 1 hour. This includes not flushing the toilet. After the hour, take another reading. If the meter has changed, there may be a leak in an underground pipe. If you encounter this situation in a BCHS rental property, it is important you call Coulson's Real Estate to arrange repairs.

## I would like some more information

There are plenty of water efficient tips and advice available online. Local government and your energy providers also have resources available regarding water use.

If you have an enquiry specific to your BCHS property, please contact Coulson's Real Estate:

For any further information regarding 'Breaches: Rent and General', please contact Coulson's Real Estate:

Email) [Kerry@coulsonrealestate.com.au](mailto:Kerry@coulsonrealestate.com.au)  
Phone) 07 3372 9666

*Note: Other tenancy factsheets are available via the BCHS website ([www.blackcommunityhousingervice.org](http://www.blackcommunityhousingervice.org))*