CUSTOMER
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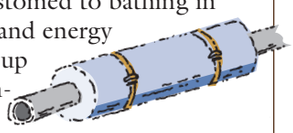
WATER IS TOO PRECIOUS TO WASTE *And the Past Two Years Were Dry*

January and February are usually two of our wettest months, but last winter's rains began to fail by mid-February, followed by the driest March and April on record. We appreciate everyone's efforts to conserve water, stretching the supply we did receive as much as possible.

Whatever the weather is at the moment, after two dry years we have a big deficit to make up. Mandatory water conservation is still in force. With that in mind, here are more water conservation tips – some new, and some familiar but still worthwhile.

Insulate Your Hot Water Pipes

Unless you are a hardy Spartan, accustomed to bathing in cold water, you probably send water and energy down the drain just waiting to warm up the shower. Water and energy efficiency are interconnected. Saving hot water also saves the gas or electricity needed to heat it. Some people catch warm-up water in a bucket to use later on their landscaping. That's great, but water is heavy to carry, and this may not be practical for everyone.



Here are a few easier things you can do to save: First, fully open just the hot water faucet. It's the fastest way to bring hot water to the point of use. Second, insulate exposed hot water pipes, especially those closest to the water heater. Water will stay warm much longer between uses. Look for pipe insulation at your hardware or home improvement store. Third, if it takes longer than a minute or two to get hot water, consider installing a hot-water-on-demand system. These systems automatically return the cold water in the hot water line back to the water heater. Instead of relying on pressure in the line, a recirculating pump brings hot water quickly to the faucet when it's needed. The pump is installed between the hot and cold water lines at the faucet furthest from the water heater.

Try a search using "on demand hot water system" online to find a list of manufacturers and products. (Beware of hot water recirculation systems, however: these waste a lot of energy compared to the value of the water saved.)

Toilet Leaks: Put a Stop to Them!

Did you know that leaks can account for up to 30 percent of indoor household water use?

Toilets are the worst. They leak because the parts inside the tank simply wear out. Aging flapper valves don't seal properly, letting water leak silently into the bowl. (You may hear a telltale "whoosh" as the tank refills periodically between flushes.) Worse, the flapper valve can stick completely open, letting the water run constantly. Jiggling the handle doesn't help. Instead, fix or replace the faulty parts.

Checking for silent leaks is easy! Put a dye tablet (free from EBMUD) or several drops of food coloring in the tank. Don't flush, just wait 15 minutes to see if the dye color appears in the bowl. If it does, it's fix-it time. To be sure you replace the flapper with a perfect match, take the old flapper to the hardware store to compare. After you replace the flapper, do the dye test again to be sure it seals properly.

Go to the *ebmud.com* Drought Help Center to see a new video on shorter showers and fixing toilet leaks. You'll also find a step-by-step "How to Fix a Leaky Toilet" video. And you can click on the water drop to see a slide show on how to replace your flapper ball.

Some People Can Really Save Water

Oakland's Angeli family maximizes water savings to a remarkable degree. For years, their household of two in Oakland has rarely used more than 50 gallons per day – less than 25 gallons per person! In their garden, the couple use drip irrigation to establish low-water-use plants. Now the yard stays lush and colorful with infrequent watering by hand. Indoors, they use only a cup of water to brush teeth and never, ever let the water run. Reduced toilet flushing (if it's yellow, let it mellow) and shutting off the shower while soaping up saved more still. They have helped neighbors and friends add drip systems in their gardens. By their good example, they inspire all of us to help achieve our community's water savings goal! Not everyone can conserve this much – but they provide an admirable model.

Current water use restrictions prohibit car washing except with hoses that have shut-off nozzles. Frugal car washing can reduce your usage to about 25 gallons per car wash – or less. Free shut-off nozzles are available from EBMUD.

Or – use a commercial car wash that uses recycling. Lafayette Car Wash in Lafayette is one of many East Bay Area car washes that recycle water. They have a system that recycles 50 to 60 percent of the water it uses, and all but the final rinse water is recycled. By improving the efficiency of the system over time, they are washing the same number of cars with about half the water, down to 25 gallons per car.

We ask homeowners to look for leaks, but businesses can benefit by checking, too. A leak repair at Applebee's netted quick savings. It can be difficult to find and repair some leaks because of their location. Water was appearing in a landscaped area at the Applebee's restaurant in Pinole. After some investigation, EBMUD determined that the leak was in a water line in a concrete slab foundation. Applebee's took the initiative and did repairs, which involved cutting through the concrete. That work is saving about 6,000 gallons per day! Applebee's is one of many businesses that have contributed to our communities' efforts to reach our water savings goals.

Save water!

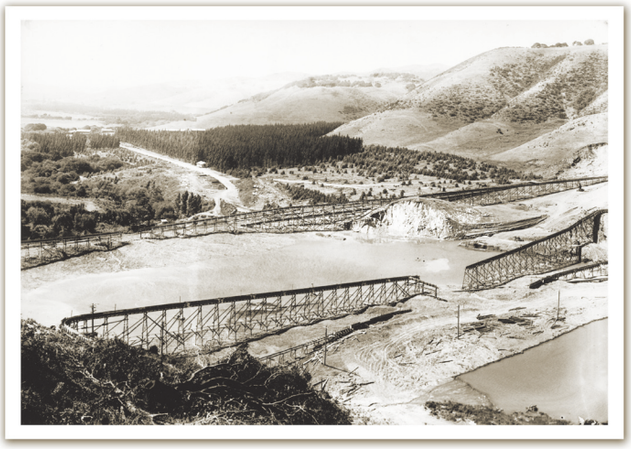
San Pablo Dam Undergoing Seismic Upgrade

Improving and Rebuilding

To provide the best service for you, EBMUD continually maintains and improves your water system. Part of that effort concerns the seismic safety of the facilities.

This summer saw the beginning of new safeguards to protect San Pablo Dam from earthquakes. We really thought this job was done back in the 1960s and again in the 1980s, but seismic knowledge and engineering techniques have evolved over time. In 2002, the State of California Division of Safety of Dams requested a reanalysis of the seismic stability of San Pablo Dam.

The new analysis, completed in 2004, said the dam could be deformed by a major earthquake. The reservoir level was lowered for safety, pending completion of the latest project. Removing the old downstream buttress is now completed. More work will strengthen the foundation with cement deep soil mixing, and we will install a new larger compacted earth buttress downstream, all by 2010.



San Pablo Dam, providing "raw water" for two water treatment plants, was built between 1916 and 1921. It's made partly of hydraulic fill, earth washed from nearby slopes.

Massive earth movers worked this summer to remove up to 80 feet of soil below San Pablo Dam.

A drill can go 100 feet down into bedrock.

Bay Pollution Prevention Corner

An Itty Bitty Fruit Label Alert

A recent customer survey shows us that EBMUD customers are greatly concerned about the health of San Francisco Bay. You can really help. Who knew those little plastic stickers on fruits and vegetables could cause a big problem? Surprisingly, those little stickers, and myriad other plastics, such as food wrap and sandwich bags, are washed down home drains all too frequently. They can end up in a variety of places – stuck in your drain, or stuck on wastewater treatment plant pumps and hoses, or caught in screens and filters. Even worse, they can end up in San Francisco Bay. Some plastics neither float nor sink, making it difficult to remove them in any wastewater treatment process. Unfortunately, they can end up where no one wants them – in the bay and the ocean.

In this case, there's an easy, no-cost solution. You can prevent pollution by always removing plastic stickers and wrappers, placing them in the garbage before you wash and peel your fruits and vegetables. Remember, too, that plastics should not go into garbage disposals (which waste water and energy and send even smaller bits of plastic down the drain), nor do they belong in your garden compost or green bin.

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Board meetings are open to the public and held the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 1:15 p.m. in the EBMUD Board Room, 2nd floor, 375 Eleventh Street, Oakland.

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- Questions about your EBMUD bill
- Emergencies or open hydrants (24 hrs.)
- EBMUD street work information
- Water conservation questions

***Call toll-free** 1-866-40-EBMUD (1-866-403-2683)*

- Jobs Hotline 510-287-0742
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EBMUD

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