Water in Idaho

Water is one of Idaho's most important resources. Our rivers, lakes, and streams provide natural beauty and supply the water necessary for drinking, recreation, industry, agriculture, and aquatic life. Ground water is particularly important to Idahoans; 95% of our drinking water comes from ground water. Protecting Idaho's water from contamination is vital to sustaining our quality of life.

Most water in Idaho comes from winter storms and is stored as snow in reservoirs and as ground water. When snowfall is plentiful, these storage systems provide adequate water. In years when snow pack is below normal, our water resources are stretched thin, and it becomes particularly important to conserve.

What You Can Do

Inside this brochure you will find some simple tips on how to conserve and protect water inside and outside your home or business.

> *Start here.* Evaluate water use at home and work to identify conservation and protection opportunities.

> *Spread the word.* Educate friends and family on what they can do to conserve and protect water.

> *Lend a hand.* Volunteer to work with your community on water conservation and protection. Many communities offer volunteer opportunities such as river cleanups and storm drain stenciling projects to protect and improve water quality.

More Information

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
DEQ is the state agency responsible for protecting water quality in Idaho. Contact DEQ's Water Quality Division or the DEQ regional office near you, or visit our website to learn more about the agency's surface, ground, and drinking water programs and water quality protection.
www.deq.idaho.gov

For more information about water quality and lawn care, see DEQ's brochure on *Fertilizer & Pesticide Use at Home: How to Have a Beautiful Lawn and Protect the Environment* on the Web at *www.deq.idaho.gov/ground-water-protection*.

Idaho Department of Water Resources
IDWR works to ensure water is conserved and available to sustain Idaho's economy, ecosystem, and the resulting quality of life. Visit the IDWR website at *www.idwr.idaho.gov*.

Local Utilities
Your local water utility may be a good source of information on water quality and conservation specific to your area. Some offer free residential and business water audits. Look in the phone book or on your water bill for contact information.

DEQ Regional Offices

Boise	373-0550 or 888-800-3480
Coeur d'Alene	769-1422 or 877-370-0017
Idaho Falls	528-2650 or 800-232-4635
Lewiston	799-4370 or 877-541-3304
Pocatello	236-6160 or 888-655-6160
Twin Falls	736-2190 or 800-270-1663

Water and You:
How to protect water quality, conserve water, and save money

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
www.deq.idaho.gov

Conserve Water

Inside:

Repair Leaks

On average, leaks comprise 10% of the average homeowner's indoor water use. Dripping faucets can waste about 2,000 gallons of water each year. Leaky toilets can waste as much as 200 gallons each day. Regularly check for and fix leaky faucets, toilets, and other appliances and watch your water bill go down.

Purchase Water-Efficient Appliances

All appliances are not created equally. Some consume more water and energy than others. Purchase appliances with:

> *Multi-cycles.* This will allow you to select more energy- and water-efficient cycles when heavy duty cleaning is not required.
> *Energy Star™ label.* These high-efficiency models use 35-50% less water and 50% less energy than conventional models.

Operate Water-Consuming Appliances Efficiently

How you operate appliances can have an impact on water usage. Think about:

> *Full loads.* Only run the dishwasher and clothes washer when they are fully loaded.

> *Maintenance.* Keep appliances running efficiently by following prescribed

Outside:

Home water consumption often doubles in the summer to meet demands of thirsty lawns. You can help conserve water while maintaining a healthy lawn.

Sprinkle Wisely and Sparingly

Proper lawn watering can save thousands of gallons of water annually.

> *Timing.* Water your lawn during the early morning hours when temperatures and winds are low to minimize evaporation. Adjust water according to weather and hours of daylight.

> *Volume.* Avoid overwatering. Two or three times a week is usually sufficient. Monitor how much water goes on your lawn. Test soil moisture by using a screwdriver as a soil probe. If it goes in easily, don't water.

> *Placement.* Position sprinklers to water the lawn only, not the sidewalk or street. Adjust settings to match the type of plant. Some areas may need more or less water than others.

More Outside Tips

> *Use a broom.* Don't waste water hosing down your driveway or sidewalk.

> *Go native.* Plant native vegetation or drought-tolerant plants.

> *Mulch.* Insulate and retain moisture in soil.

Protect Water Quality

Water conservation is only part of the picture. Protecting the quality of our water ensures safe drinking water and preserves this resource for all Idahoans.

Storm Drains

Storm drains, those grates on the side of the road, often feed directly into our streams, rivers, and lakes. It is important to minimize contaminants entering these systems.

> Prevent car soap, wash water, chemicals, or other pollutants from entering storm drains. Do not pour used oil down the storm drain.

> Keep storm drain areas free of litter, leaves, and other debris."

Fertilizers and Pesticides

Use fertilizers and pesticides wisely. Chemicals can build up in the soil or seep into ground and surface waters, adversely affecting water quality.

> Use the proper fertilizer for the plant and avoid over-applying.

> Try non-toxic bug controls first. Many common pests can be cured with less hazardous alternatives.

> Buy the least amount of product needed and properly dispose of containers.