

Using Water Wisely

A GUIDE TO CONSERVING WATER
IN ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS



Acton Water District
693 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton



Why Conserve Water?

Limited Resources. The Acton Water District relies upon wells located in Acton's groundwater aquifers. Acton's groundwater is a limited resource. The Acton Water District draws its water from a few medium-yield aquifers; our town does not have a wealth of high-yield aquifers.

Water Quality. Due primarily to local geological conditions, certain wells provide better water quality than do others. If there is adequate storage to meet demand, the District can manage the system to optimize the quality of the water. As demand increases, so too does the need to operate all wells, including those that may provide water with a color that is objectionable to some customers. Increased demand can also necessitate the need to built expensive treatment facilities.

Peak Usage Problems. The District struggles to keep up with demand during peak-use seasons and as Acton's population increases. During high-demand days, the water level in storage tanks may drop, causing decreases in pressure in certain residences. Should storage tank levels drop too low, the District will be faced with imposing a ban on all outdoor water uses in order to ensure adequate water for basic residential use and emergency use (such as fire-fighting.)

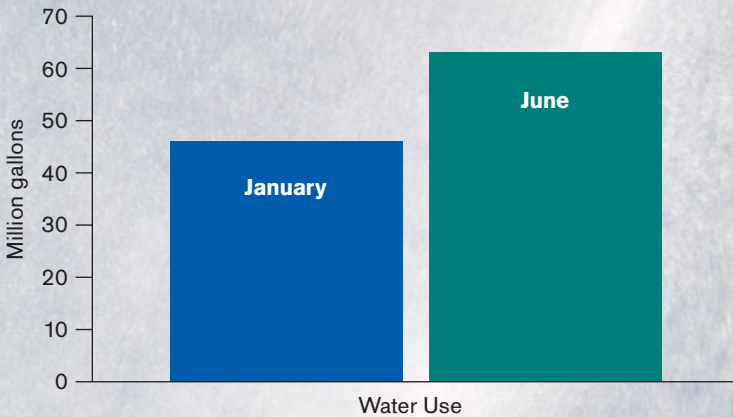
Water Withdrawal Restrictions. In order to minimize environmental impact from water withdrawals and ensure adequate water supplies for the future in all Massachusetts river basins, the Department of Environmental Protection regulates the annual water withdrawals of public water supplies. Controlling usage during the peak demand period (generally during the months of May-August) is important in staying within the permitted level.

Costs. The Acton Water District's rates are set to encourage water conservation. The more water you conserve, the more you save, particularly during the high-demand months.

OUTDOOR WATER USE RESTRICTIONS

The Acton Water District Outdoor Water Use Restrictions go into effect every year, regardless of weather conditions. They help us to meet our demand during the warmer months, when usage can increase dramatically.

Average January vs. June



Acton Water District: Outdoor Water Use Restrictions Effective May 1–October 1



Even numbered houses may use water outdoors: *Tues, Thurs, Sat*



Odd numbered houses may use water outdoors: *Wed, Fri, Sun*



No lawn watering from **7AM-7PM**. This restriction applies to *lawns only*



No outdoor water use on **Mondays** (includes new lawns)



UNDERGROUND WATERING SYSTEMS

Acton Water District Rules and Regulations for Underground Lawn Watering Systems

1. All automatic lawn watering systems connected to the public water supply **must** be equipped with a timing device that can be set to make the system conform to the District's odd/even outdoor watering restrictions.
2. All automatic lawn watering systems **must** be equipped with some type of moisture sensing device that will prevent the system from starting automatically when not needed.
3. All automatic lawn watering systems **must** be installed with an approved backflow prevention device (Watts 800 or equal). Said device will be inspected initially by the plumbing inspector, and may be inspected periodically after that by Water District employees.
4. Any person who now has, or who intends to install an automatic lawn watering system in the future, must notify the Water District office of the existence of said system, or of their intention to install a new system prior to the actual installation. All systems, those currently in existence, as well as any installed in the future, must comply with all rules and regulations adopted on this date.
5. Any system not in conformance with the above criteria may be disconnected from the public water supply system.

TIPS FOR EFFICIENT IRRIGATION

Know how to run your irrigation controller.

Adjust the watering times (number of minutes) and the frequency of watering (daily, twice a week, etc.) based on weather conditions.

Change your settings to adjust for seasonal differences and reset the timer when needed. OR

Invest in an evapotranspiration controller to adjust system run times based upon the weather.

Install a rain shutoff device or soil moisture sensor.

Regularly check for leaks, broken heads and other problems.

Check the credentials of your contractor.

Water after the sun has gone down or in the early morning.

Make sure your spray and sprinkler heads are properly adjusted to avoid watering non-landscape areas.

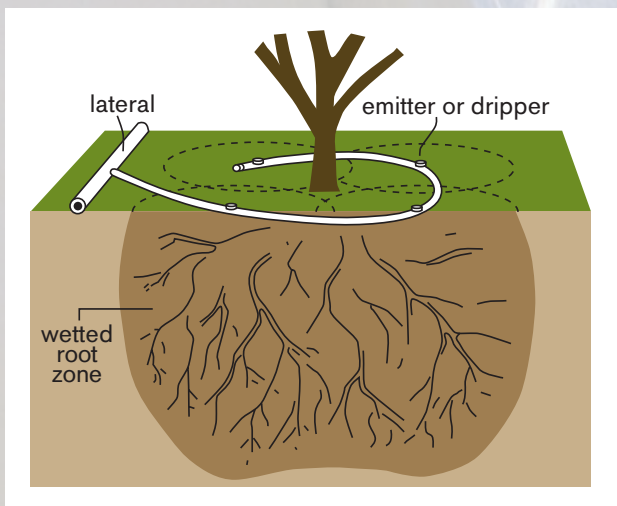
Water shady areas about 30 percent less than sunny areas.

If possible use drip irrigation to water trees and shrubs.

To eliminate runoff, set your cycles to no more than 15 minutes each, one to two hours apart to allow water to soak into the soil. For example: water three times for 15 minutes, instead of 45 minutes all at once.

Develop a separate drip watering schedule for trees, shrubs and lower beds.

Aerate in the spring and fall to loosen soil and reduce runoff.



WATER WISE GARDENING TIPS



- Amend soil with organic material to help retain water.
- Mulch any exposed soil (chopped leaves, bark, hay, dry grass clippings, or other organic materials work well.)
- Plant drought tolerant lawn and plantings.
- Minimize irrigation or install water conserving (such as drip) irrigation fixtures.
- Use rainwater catchment devices (such as rain barrels, cisterns.)
- Follow the Acton Water District's outdoor water use restrictions to help reduce peak demand on Acton's wells and prevent a watering ban.
- When re-seeding or establishing lawns, use grass seed that is drought and disease-resistant. Check with your local nursery for appropriate mixes.
- Minimize the size of your lawn – there are numerous attractive, water conserving lawn alternatives.
- Mow your lawn no shorter than 2 inches to promote its vigor and control weeds.
- Leave the cuttings on the lawn, they help retain moisture and provide valuable nutrients.
- Remember that most lawns that go brown in the heat of July and August are not dead – they have just gone dormant.

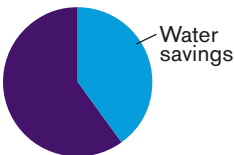
INDOOR WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

- Check for household leaks by reading your water meter before and after a period where no water has been used. Toilets leaks can be detected by dye tabs placed in the toilet tank.
- Install water-saving fixtures such as low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators.
- When it is time to replace your clothes and dish washing machines, buy a water-saving model (these are usually horizontal-axis models) which save a substantial amount of water *and* energy compared to standard washers.
- Don't use in-sink garbage disposals, which require a lot of water for operation. Instead, dispose of food waste in a compost pile.
- Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth or shaving. Fill the sink to shave instead of letting the water run.
- Install a displacement device in the toilet tank to save about ½ gallon of water per flush.
- Take shorter showers. Install a water-saving showerhead which can cut water usage in the shower from five to seven gallons per minute to less than three gallons per minute.
- Wash only full laundry and dish washer loads.
- Install water savings devices both indoors and out. The Acton Water District offers many water savings devices free to customers who agree to install them. See the back of this booklet for a list of what is available. You can visit the Water District Monday through Friday 7:30–4:00 to pick up these devices and get information on how to use your water efficiently.

Horizontal-Axis Washing Machines Save

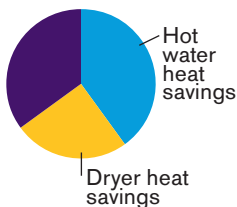
Water

Approximately 40 percent savings



Energy

Approximately 60 percent savings



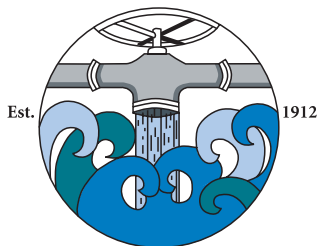
Check the EPA energy star website (www.energystar.gov) to find information on water and energy-saving washing machines

The Acton Water District offers the following devices free to customers who agree to use them:

- Low flow showerheads
- Low flow faucet aerators
- Faucet flip switches
- Toilet "tank banks" and leak detection tablets
- Outdoor water conservation kits
- Mechanical hose faucet timers
- Soil moisture meters
- Rain gauges

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Acton Water



District

Acton Water District

www.actonh2o.com



Acton Garden Club

www.actongardenclub.org