

## Drought Alert: Water Saving Tips for Santa Cruz County Employees and Residents

On January 28, 2014, the Santa Cruz County board of Supervisors adopted a resolution which declared a state of drought in Santa Cruz County and urged all County residents to take voluntary measures to reduce water use by at least 20%. The board further directed all County departments and employees to immediately implement water conservation measures and take all reasonable actions to reduce water use by at least 20% at County facilities. Following are things that County employees can do to reduce water use:

### At Work:

1. Turn off the faucet while you're soaping your hands.
2. Remember that urinals use no water or less water than toilets.
3. Don't use the toilet as a garbage can.
4. Turn off the faucet when you're not using the water. Be sure it is off tight.
5. Report leaks: Help catch leaks at County facilities by calling Building Maintenance at 454-5255 to report broken sprinklers, dripping sinks, or constantly-running toilets.

### At Home

6. Wash your car at a car wash, which uses recycled water.
7. Do full loads of laundry and dishes.
8. Leave clippings on the lawn. And cut grass at highest setting on your mower to help it grow deeper roots. Better yet, replace turf with low water use landscaping.
9. Water less—no more than once per week—and water by hand. Native plants are dormant in the winter and do not need water. If you must water, water individual plants in the cool early morning or evening so the water doesn't evaporate in the heat.
10. Don't thaw frozen food under running water. Put it in the fridge or microwave instead.
11. Compost food waste with backyard or curbside composting rather than use the garbage disposal.
12. Take shorter showers. A timer can be helpful if you lose track of time.
13. Turn off the faucet when brushing teeth or shaving.
14. Capture water in buckets or a gallon jug while waiting for it to heat up, and use it to water the garden.
15. Don't hose down your driveway or other hard surfaces. Use a broom!
16. Do some simple tests to check for leaks in your sprinklers, toilet, and appliances. Check your water supplier for the availability of a free home water audit .
17. Help water-wasting neighbors change their ways by calling the water agency or County Environmental Health at 831-454-2022 if you see overwatered lawns, water running off, leaks, or other wasteful water use.
18. Cover pools to prevent evaporation.
19. Prevent evaporation in the garden with mulch or drip irrigation.
20. Consider water wise landscaping to replace part of a thirsty lawn.
21. Replace sprinkler heads with low flow heads and put flow-reducing aerators in sink faucets.
22. Consider installing a greywater irrigation system.
23. Take advantage of hundreds of dollars in rebates on high-efficiency toilets, washing machines, and lawn conversion and irrigation upgrade projects. Check your water agency for details.
24. Be aware of your water use, and think of your own ways to reduce or cut back.