



Water-Saving Tips for Durban Residents

Practical Ways to Conserve Water in the Ethekewini Region

Introduction

Water is a precious resource, especially in Durban, where droughts and water restrictions are increasingly common. By taking proactive steps to reduce daily water consumption, residents can help secure sufficient supplies for all, protect the environment, and reduce municipal costs. Below are comprehensive tips tailored for Durban's climate, infrastructure, and lifestyle.

Understanding Durban's Water Challenges

Durban, as part of the Ethekewini Metropolitan Municipality, often faces unpredictable rainfall and periods of drought. Infrastructure constraints and population growth add pressure to the city's water supply. Saving water has become not just a matter of cost, but also of environmental and social responsibility.

Household Water-Saving Techniques

- **Fix Leaks Promptly:** A leaking tap or toilet can waste thousands of litres a year. Regularly check all plumbing fixtures and repair leaks without delay.
- **Install Water-Efficient Fixtures:** Fit low-flow showerheads, tap aerators, and dual-flush toilets. These devices significantly reduce water use without sacrificing comfort.
- **Take Shorter Showers:** Aim for showers lasting less than five minutes. Use a bucket to capture extra water while waiting for the shower to warm up, and use it for cleaning or watering plants.
- **Turn Off the Tap When Not Needed:** Don't let taps run while brushing teeth, shaving, or washing dishes. Use a basin filled with water for rinsing instead of running the tap continuously.
- **Use Full Loads:** Operate dishwashers and washing machines only with full loads to maximise water efficiency.
- **Harvest Rainwater:** Install rainwater tanks to collect water from your roof. This can be used for gardens, flushing toilets, or washing cars.
- **Reuse Grey Water:** Collect water from baths, showers, and laundry to irrigate your garden. Make sure to use eco-friendly cleaning products to avoid harming plants or soil.

Outdoor Water Conservation

- **Water Gardens Wisely:** Water your garden early in the morning or late in the afternoon to reduce evaporation. Use mulch to retain soil moisture, and select indigenous, drought-tolerant plants.
- **Use a Broom, Not a Hose:** Sweep driveways, paths, and patios instead of hosing them down.
- **Check Outdoor Pipes and Taps:** Outdoor leaks are often overlooked. Inspect pipes, irrigation systems, and taps for leaks – especially after heavy rains or gardening work.
- **Drip Irrigation:** Use drip or trickle irrigation for gardens, which delivers water directly to roots with minimal waste.
- **Car Washing:** Wash your car with a bucket and sponge rather than a hose, or better yet, use a commercial car wash that recycles water.



Behavioural Changes for the Whole Family

- **Educate Everyone:** Make water-saving a family priority. Talk to children about Durban's water challenges and encourage them to adopt water-wise habits.
- **Monitor Usage:** Keep an eye on your water bill for sudden increases, which may signal leaks or overuse.
- **Report Leaks:** If you see leaking pipes in your neighbourhood or public spaces, report them to the Ethekewini Municipality promptly.
- **Be Water-Wise During Shortages:** Obey all municipal restrictions, such as times for garden watering or car washing bans.

Smart Water Use in Businesses

- **Upgrade Facilities:** Install water-efficient fixtures in workplace bathrooms and kitchens.
- **Regular Maintenance:** Schedule routine checks for leaks, faulty valves, or inefficient equipment.
- **Employee Engagement:** Encourage staff to use water wisely. Display reminders in kitchens and restrooms.
- **Grey Water Systems:** Where practical, reuse water for cleaning or landscaping.
- **Participate in Municipal Programmes:** Stay informed about Ethekewini's water-saving initiatives or rebates for water-saving technology.

Seasonal and Emergency Water Conservation

- **Prepare for Drought:** Keep emergency supplies of bottled water and know where your neighbourhood's municipal water tanks are located.
- **Stay Informed:** Follow updates from Ethekewini Municipality, especially during dry spells, and comply with temporary water restrictions.
- **Adopt Water-Efficient Habits Year-Round:** Remember that Durban can experience water stress in any season. Make conservation part of your lifestyle, not just a reaction to crisis.

Additional Tips & Local Resources

- **Use Indigenous Plants:** Choose local flora for landscaping, which naturally require less water and maintenance.
- **Mulch Garden Beds:** Spread organic mulch in flower beds and vegetable patches to conserve moisture and suppress weeds.
- **Stay Engaged With Community Initiatives:** Join local water conservation drives and share tips with neighbours.
- **Consult the Ethekewini Municipality Website:** For the latest water-saving regulations, rebates and advice, visit the official city website.

Conclusion

Saving water in Durban is everyone's responsibility. By making small changes to daily routines, households and businesses can play a significant role in safeguarding the city's water supply. Every drop counts—so start today, and encourage others to do the same for a resilient, water-secure Durban.