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Water conservation encouraged during dry months

In the weeks leading up to springtime — Oklahoma’s “rainy season” — the state is seeing some dry pockets, with “extreme drought” status being given to parts of southeastern Oklahoma. According to the Oklahoma Climatological Survey, Washington County is hovering in the “moderate drought” range, with Bartlesville squarely between “abnormally dry” and “severe drought.”

As always, the City of Bartlesville is encouraging residents and businesses to conserve water where possible due to the possibility of continued drought conditions.

“Our wettest months typically occur during the spring — March, April and May — and we anticipate rainfall during those months this year as well,” said Water Utilities Director Terry Lauritsen. “But we are experiencing ‘moderate drought’ conditions at this time, so we are encouraging everyone to conserve water wherever they can.”

According to Lauritsen, these conditions are expected this time of year.

“This is typically one of our drier times of the year, so we need for everyone to be diligent regarding water use,” he said.

Indoor solutions

Indoors, long showers are the largest user of what is arguably the world’s most precious resource. Limiting shower time, as well as updating plumbing fixtures to “low-flow” systems can go a long way in conserving water, Lauritsen said.

“Indoors, showers are the largest user of water, which could easily be reduced and would go a long way toward conservation,” he said.

“Additionally, all new plumbing has ‘low-flow’ capabilities, which should replace conventional fixtures whenever possible. Showerheads, toilets, sinks — all are available with water-saving low-flow aerators.

“Little things can add up and make a big difference,” he said.

General tips

- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth or shaving. (Save 4 to 10 gallons a day.)
- Never use your toilet as a wastebasket. (Save 3 to 7 gallons per flush.)
- Don’t take marathon showers. (Save 3 to 7 gallons per shower.)
- Run your dishwasher only when full. (Save up to 15 gallons per load.)
- Run the washing machine only when full and adjust the water level setting carefully. Your machine uses 22 to 25 gallons per load. (Save enough water for 1 to 2 loads every week; saves hot water cost, too.)

Faucets, showerheads & toilets

- A dripping, trickling or oozing faucet or showerhead can waste from 75 to several hundred gallons of water per week, depending on the size of the drip. Worn out washers are the main cause of these leaks, and a new washer generally cost about \$1.
- Faucets typically use 2 to 7 gallons per minute. Installing a low-flow aerator can reduce the flow by as much as 25 percent — or up to a gallon and a half per minute. Remove and clean aerators often.
- Leaky toilets make trickling sounds and can waste 50 gallons of water a day or more. Parts are inexpensive and fairly east to replace.

Gardens and Landscape

- Water in the cool of the day (early morning is best), and repair leaky hose connections and sprinkler valves. Install rain sensors in timing devices to prevent watering when it’s unnecessary. And remember the One Inch Rule: If there has been an inch of rainfall during the week, you don’t need to water at all.