

## Home Energy Audit Part 5

### WATER

Being water and energy efficient provides a wide range of benefits—for utilities, consumers, businesses and the community as a whole. Using less water means moving and treating less water, which helps reduce the strain on our water supplies and drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

Whether through simple daily tasks or the installation of water- and energy-efficient products, there are many ways to decrease water and energy use in our homes. EPA estimates that if one out of every 100 American homes was retrofitted with water-efficient fixtures, we could save about 100 million kWh of electricity per year and avoid adding 80,000 tons of greenhouse gas to the atmosphere.

Water is essential to our lives and hot water is a large part of it. We use it to shower, run the dishwasher and wash clothes. Quite frequently, we use more hot water than we think -- the average rate hot water flows out of the kitchen faucet is 2 gallons per minute, and an eight-minute shower uses 10 gallons of hot water. Add it all up and the average household uses 64 gallons of hot water a day. It is no wonder that water heating is the second largest energy expense, accounting for about 18 percent of homeowners' utility bills. From no-cost changes to low-cost improvements to long-term investments, there are plenty of ways to heat your water more efficiently.

#### *Some good reasons to save water:*

- \* Save money- using less water will reduce your water bill, the bill for energy to heat water and your sewage bill.
- \* Using less water will mean not running out of hot water.
- \* If you are on a well, using less water will save on you pumping and home water treatment.
- \* If you have a septic field, using less water will preserve the life of your system. Less use means you can save money by pumping your septic less frequently.
- \* Using less water means treating it less, moving it less, and heating it less which will lower the environmental impact that chemical and energy production create.

#### **Audit Questions:**

Answer “Yes, No, or Does Not Apply” to each of the questions. With each question make a note on how it could affect, positively or negatively your home’s energy usage.

- 1. Are all showers fitted with a low-flow shower head? What is your flow rate? *Use the Water Flow Bag to determine.***
- 2. Do most of the household members turn the faucet off while washing faces, shaving, brushing teeth etc?**
- 3. Do all faucets have water-saving faucet attachments? What is your flow rate? *Use the Water Flow Bag to determine.***
- 4. Do most household members take 5-minute or less showers?**

**5. Do you have any toilet tank leaks? *Use the detecting tablets for this.***

**5. Do you scrap food from dirty dishes instead of rinsing?**

**6. Is the water heater set at 120F or lower?**

**7. Are the water heater pipes insulated?**

**8. In the summer, how often do you run your lawn sprinkler system? Are there any signs of over watering such as puddling, perpetually damp spots, mold or fungus growth, large amounts of water run-off? Does the system run even at times that it may be raining?**

**9. Do lawn sprinkler heads face driveways or sidewalks, therefore watering those instead of lawn or landscaping?**

**10. Do you water your lawn and landscaping early in the morning to avoid wind and heat loss?**

**11. Additional Comments or items to make note of...**

**Simple Kitchen Tips**

In an experiment, cooking the same recipes in the same kitchen with the same utensils, some cooks used twice as much energy as others. How? Read the hints below, and perhaps you can use some in your audit.

Pilot lights use as much as 30% of all the gas a range uses.

Use pots about the same diameter as the burner.

Use lids on the pots.

Use a pressure cooker instead of a regular pot

Turn the burner off a few minutes before the dish is done.  
Decide what you want before opening the refrigerator door.

Take everything you need for a meal from the refrigerator all at once and quickly.

Run only full loads in the dishwasher.