

# Kansas Water Facts

To most Kansans, fresh, clean water “goes with the territory.” They turn on the tap and there it is, good water. We assume water for drinking, cooking, personal hygiene, lawns, gardens, livestock, industry, etc. will last forever. Not true. Good, clean water is fast becoming a scarce commodity.

- ◆ Seas and oceans contain 97 percent of the water on earth. Snow, glaciers, and polar ice account for 2.25 percent. Rivers, lakes, and groundwater represent only .6 percent of the total water that produces the world’s food supply.
- ◆ Household water use has jumped 500 percent in the past 50 years. The wash cycle on the family’s automatic clothes washer uses more water in 30 minutes than a pioneer family used in one whole day.
- ◆ Just one inch of water over one acre of land equals 27,152 gallons.
- ◆ One acre of irrigated corn in western Kansas uses over 400,000 gallons (16.3 acres/inch) of water per season during a dry year.
- ◆ With dryland farming, contour level benches for moisture conservation can increase sorghum yields by 18 bushels per acre.
- ◆ Each additional inch of water made available to a growing wheat crop on dryland will increase yields by 4 bushels per acre or 640 bushels for a quarter section of land.
- ◆ Level basin terraces on cropland in western Kansas will hold 1 inch of runoff. This would be over 4 million gallons of water per quarter section of land.
- ◆ Oil and gas are important natural resources; however, we cannot drink them. Water is truly our most important natural resource.
- ◆ A steadily dripping faucet can waste 2000 gallons of water a year.
- ◆ It takes 150 gallons of water to grow enough wheat for one loaf of bread.

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# Tips for Water Conservation

*Everyone can use the following tips to conserve the state's water resources.*

## **KITCHEN AND LAUNDRY**

- ◆ Use automatic dishwashers only for full loads. Every time a dishwasher is operated, about 17 gallons of water are used. Make each gallon count.
- ◆ When washing dishes by hand, do not leave the water running for rinsing. If two sinks are used, fill one with soapy water and one with rinse water. If one sink is used, gather all the washed dishes in the dish rack and rinse them with an inexpensive spray device.
- ◆ Do not let the faucet run while cleaning vegetables. The same purpose can be served by putting a stopper in the sink and filling the sink with clean water.
- ◆ Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator. This ends the wasteful practice of running tap water to cool it for drinking. Storing water in the refrigerator also has the nice effect of removing any chlorine taste out of the water.
- ◆ Use automatic washing machines only for full loads. Automatic washers use 30 to 35 gallons of water for a few garments.
- ◆ Check faucets and pipes for leaks. Leaks waste water 24 hours a day, seven days a week and often can be repaired with a very inexpensive washer. Not only will repairing leaks conserve water, the effort may save on the water bill.

## **BATHROOM**

- ◆ Check toilets for leaks. A leak in the toilet, that can neither be seen nor heard, may be wasting more than 100 gallons of water a day. To check for leaks, put a little food coloring in the toilet tank. If, without flushing, the coloring begins to appear in the bowl, the tank is leaking and should be repaired immediately.
- ◆ Take shorter showers. Long, hot showers waste five to 10 gallons of water every unneeded minute. Limit showers to the time it takes to soap up, wash, and rinse off.
- ◆ Install water-saving shower heads or flow restrictors. Most shower heads put out five to 10 gallons water a minute, while three gallons are actually enough for a refreshing, cleansing shower.
- ◆ Take baths. A bath in a partially filled tub uses less water than all but the shortest showers.
- ◆ Turn off the water after wetting toothbrushes. After wetting a toothbrush and filling a glass for rinsing, there is no need to keep water running down the drain.
- ◆ Rinse razors in the sink. Before shaving, fill the bottom of the sink with a few inches of warm water. This will rinse razor blades just as efficiently as running water, and is far less wasteful.