

Water Conservation Tips for Pool and Spa Users

Members of the Association of Pool & Spa Professionals are strong advocates for water conservation. Since we are in the business of using water for health, recreation and relaxation, it's important to us that water remains abundant and accessible for all. We believe this is possible if all pool and spa users are educated about water conservation techniques, and are willing to make just a few, sensible changes in their water consumption habits.

First, a few facts on household water use for bathing or recreation:

- Properly maintained spa water needs to be replaced only two to three times a year and can be reused for landscape watering when drained. In a pool, one filling lasts decades. In fact, draining a pool is so unusual the process usually requires a professional.
- Baths use water once. A spa offers 4 to 6 months of use for the same water. Taking just five baths, at 80 gallons each (normal tub size), uses enough water to fill a typical 400-gallon spa. Filling and draining a bathtub twice a week for four months uses 2,720 gallons of water. A spa uses the same 400 gallons of water continuously throughout those four months.
- A jetted or whirlpool bathtub used twice a week consumes 240 gallons. In just 4 months these tubs use about the same amount of water as most pools use in an entire season.
- A properly maintained spa or pool uses significantly less water in a season than watering a lawn of the same size. Watering a typical residential lawn requires 180 gallons each time it's watered. Up to 90 percent of the water used to sprinkle lawns on hot days is lost to evaporation. An untended garden hose can use 600 gallons or more in just a few hours -- enough to fill one and a half spas!

How to make the most of your pool and/or spa water:

1. Cover-up! A properly maintained spa or pool cover is an important safety element and can also reduce evaporation and water waste by 95%. For pools, a safety cover or a solar cover also has the added benefit of helping to heat the pool. A floating cover under the spa cover will prevent additional evaporation and retain heat. For maximum effectiveness, replace spa covers every three years.
2. Be vigilant. Correct any leaks or service problems as they occur. Don't waste water by letting it leak away.

3. Maintain your spa. Proper spa maintenance will greatly increase the time between draining and refilling. Cleaning filters regularly according to manufacturer's directions will extend spa cleanliness.

4. Maintain your pool and pool filtration systems.
 - Use an automatic pool cleaner to maintain pool water. Some pool cleaners do not send debris through the filtration system helping to reduce the need to backwash.
 - Proper maintenance of pool water reduces the frequency of backwashing. Replace your aging sand or DE filtering system with a cartridge filter that does not require backwashing and saves water.

5. Additional maintenance tips for both pools and spas:
 - Remove debris that blows in from trees and landscaping. Low-tech tools are available from your retailer to make it easier to keep water clean.
 - Rinse bathing suits out with clear water rather than washing with soap. Soap powder residue is a major contributor to poor water quality.

6. If it's clean, don't drain! Drain spas and pools only when you have a water quality problem. Water only needs to be changed in a spa 2-3 times a year if you maintain your spa properly and it incorporates new water cleaning technology. Pools only need to be drained if repairs require it.

7. Re-use. When you do drain your spa, let it sit open for 48-72 hours with no new chemicals added, and then use the water on garden plants. Or, ask your retailer about products that neutralize chemicals. To prevent unsupervised use, remember to make sure that proper safety barriers are in place any time that the spa safety cover is removed.

8. Recycle! Use captured rainwater to replace water lost to evaporation in spas and pools or to refill a spa.

9. Upgrade. Spas manufactured in the last five years have new technology cleaning systems that keep the water clean much longer -- up to six months without refilling. This new technology is also available for some older models. Your spa dealer can advise you whether you can add this technology to your spa.