

# **70% of California is officially in a drought. Here are some household tips for saving water**

May 13 2021, by Andrew Sheeler, The Sacramento Bee

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In California, 41 out of 58 counties are now officially under drought conditions.

Gov. Gavin Newsom on Monday declared 39 additional counties to be in

drought, covering the Central Valley and most of Northern California.

At a press conference where he announced support for drought-stricken counties, Newsom was asked what Californians in those counties should do to conserve [water](#). The [governor](#) said that Californians already are using 16% less water than they did when the state was previously in a drought.

"Because people have been mindful, not spending more than five minutes willy-nilly in a shower," he said. Mindful of looking at a full load of laundry. Mindful that if they have a water leak that it would be wise to try to save money, not just save water, by fixing those leaks. Mindful of the fact that they can provide more resiliency by looking at drought-tolerant plants and landscaping around their homes."

So what should you do if you live in a drought-afflicted county? The governor's office refers people to the website "Save Our Water," a partnership of the Association of California Water Agencies and the California Department of Water Resources, for information. Here are some tips from that website.

## **Use less water when bathing**

Whether taking a shower or a bath, Save Our Water urges you to use less water.

The agency recommends limiting showers to five minutes, which can save 12.5 gallons per shower if using a water-efficient shower head.

As for baths, Save Our Water recommends filling the tub only halfway, or less. This can save 12 gallons of water per bath.

When brushing teeth or shaving, the agency recommends turning off the

water to save 10 gallons per person a day.

Do these actions really make a difference, given that the vast majority of water use is agricultural?

The federal Environmental Protection Agency says that Americans use more than one trillion gallons of water every year for showering.

If each U.S. resident cut their shower time by one minute, it says, the country would save a combined 170 billion gallons a year.

## **Be efficient with appliances**

Save Our Water recommends installing a high-efficiency toilet, which can save 19 gallons of water per person each day.

The agency also recommends installing aerators on your sinks, saving 1.2 gallons of water per person a day.

When washing clothes or dishes, Save Our Water urges you to save your laundry until you have a full load. This can save 15 to 45 gallons of water for a washer, and up to 15 gallons of water for a dishwasher.

## **Around the house**

Save Our Water recommends fixing leaks, which can save up to 110 gallons of water a month. The agency also recommends recycling indoor water outdoors in your garden.

When it comes to the outdoors, the agency recommends that Californians in drought-stricken areas use water-wise, drought-resistant plants and trees as part of their landscaping, and to use mulch to save

water.

The agency also recommends using a broom, and not a hose, to clean your outdoor areas, to install [drip irrigation](#) and add a smart controller, and finally, to set lawnmower blades to 3 inches to encourage deeper roots.

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