

Opinion: A house call could lower water bills, consumption

By Sarah Jones

Water is a limited resource that is vital to our everyday existence. By participating in a Water-Wise House Call your household could save thousands of gallons of water per year. Not only are you helping the environment by using water more efficiently, these water savings translate into money savings on your water bills.



Upon request, a water efficiency specialist will visit your home, assess your water usage and give you customized water savings tips. By participating in this program you are eligible for free water savings devices and rebates for up to \$500 per household.

A Water-Wise House Call consists of inspecting indoor and outdoor living areas. The first item to address is identifying leaks. This can be done by checking the water pressure and meter. Leaks can be responsible for wasting thousands of gallons of water per year. A leaky toilet alone can waste 74,000 gallons of water in a three-month period. Appliances are inspected such as the clothes washer, toilets and faucets. Each customer receives an indoor water conservation kit that includes low flow showerheads, faucet aerators, dye test, toilet flapper and a flow measurement bag.

A trained specialist will:

- Check meter reading and water pressure.
- Check toilets and other plumbing fixtures for leaks.

- Provide toilet flapper valves if needed.
- Measure showerhead flow rates and provide free low flow showerheads upon request.
- Measure faucet flow rates and provide faucet aerators for kitchen and bathrooms.
- Evaluate the efficiency of your irrigation system and provide an appropriate irrigation schedule.
- Assess irrigation sprinkler uniformity and water runoff characteristics.
- Analyze irrigation and drainage systems and provide maintenance, repair or replacement recommendations.
- Provide water conservation program materials, rebate applications and water-wise home and landscaping tips.

By participating in a Water-Wise House Call you will be eligible for rebates for water efficient appliances such as clothes washers, high efficiency toilets and hot water on demand systems. By installing more efficient water fixtures and checking for leaks, households can reduce daily per capita water use by 35 percent. On average, customers who have received a Water-Wise House Call have saved more than 45,000 gallons of water annually

Rebates available to South Tahoe Public Utility District customers:

(Terms and conditions apply)

High efficiency toilets: Receive 50 percent up to \$100 rebate for replacing your older (pre-1992) with a new 1.28 gallon per flush model or a dual flush toilet 1.1gpf/1.6gpf. Go online or look for the Watersense label.

Water efficient clothes washers: Receive a \$200 rebate for

purchasing and installing a high efficiency clothes washer with a water factor of 5.0 or less. Before you buy, view a list of qualifying washers or visit STPUD online to find out more information.

Hot water demand system: Receive a \$100 rebate for installing an approved hot water demand system. This is not a tankless water heater rebate. Call for details.

Irrigation efficiency rebate: Based on the recommendations of the Water Efficiency Specialist you may be eligible to receive up to \$400 for upgrading your irrigation system with new, high efficiency equipment. The program covers 50 percent of eligible parts and 25 percent of the labor to install them.

For more information contact me at (530) 386.3830 or sjones@stpud.dst.ca.us.

Sarah Jones is a water conservation specialist with South Tahoe Public Utility District.