

10 Ways You Can Protect Our Water!

Each of us has an impact on our local water supplies, both in terms of water quality and the amount of water we use in times of drought. Here are 10 things you can do to help protect our water quality and 10 tips to conserve water. By taking these actions, you can help ensure that we have enough water to meet the needs of all Californians and the generations to come.

1. **Don't use antibacterial soaps or cleaning products.**

Most of these contain trichlosan, a registered pesticide that has been found to harm aquatic life. The American Medical Association warns that our use of antibacterial agents may lead to “superbugs” that will be antibiotic resistant. Regular soap and water kills germs just as effectively.

2. **Never flush unwanted or out-of-date medicines down the toilet or the drain.**

Find out if your county or city has a site or program to collect unwanted pharmaceuticals. (Bay Area residents can find such sites at www.Baywise.org or by calling 1(800) CLEANUP). If not, remove all labels and wrap the products up before disposing in the garbage. If possible, pour water or vinegar in the bottle to destroy pills and make them inaccessible to children.

3. **Don't put anything except water down storm drains.**

These drains carry storm water to our local waterways, including San Francisco Bay, the Delta, and the Pacific Ocean. Used motor oil, detergents, lawn fertilizers, pesticides, and other contaminants get carried by stormwater to local waterways and cause unnecessary harm.

4. **Fix leaks that drip from your car and put down a liner in your driveway to collect oil and other materials.**

These leaks and drips contribute to stormwater pollution.

5. **Avoid using pesticides or chemical fertilizers.**

They pose a serious threat to your health and safety and they pollute both ground and surface water.

6. **Choose non-toxic household products whenever possible.**

The best way to keep from polluting is to use products that are not dangerous to the environment in the first place. For some suggestions of such alternatives, go to www.home-safe-home.org.

7. **Pick up after your pets.**

Like other contaminants, pet waste can run down the storm drains, spreading bacteria.



CLEAN WATER ACTION

CALIFORNIA

8. Don't pave your property.

The more pavement there is, the more rain water will simply run off down the storm drains, picking up pollutants on the way and causing flooding. Allowing water to soak into the ground can prevent flooding, recharge groundwater supplies, and dilute contaminants. Planting native plants that do not require much water also helps save our precious supplies.

9. Spread the word and be a water advocate.

Talk to your neighbors about how they can help too, and work with your local elected officials to ensure that pesticides, antibacterials, and other toxic chemicals are not used at schools, local parks, and other public areas. Attend your local water district meeting and tell your political leaders and water agencies to support local, state, and national policies that conserve water and stop pollution.

- 10. Keep informed.** Make sure you receive your annual drinking water quality report from your water provider (also known as a Consumer Confidence Report). If you pay a water bill directly, you should receive it automatically by July of each year. If you rent or live in a condo, you can call the local water provider and ask for a copy to be sent to you. Call us at 415-369-9160 if you have questions about what the report is telling you.