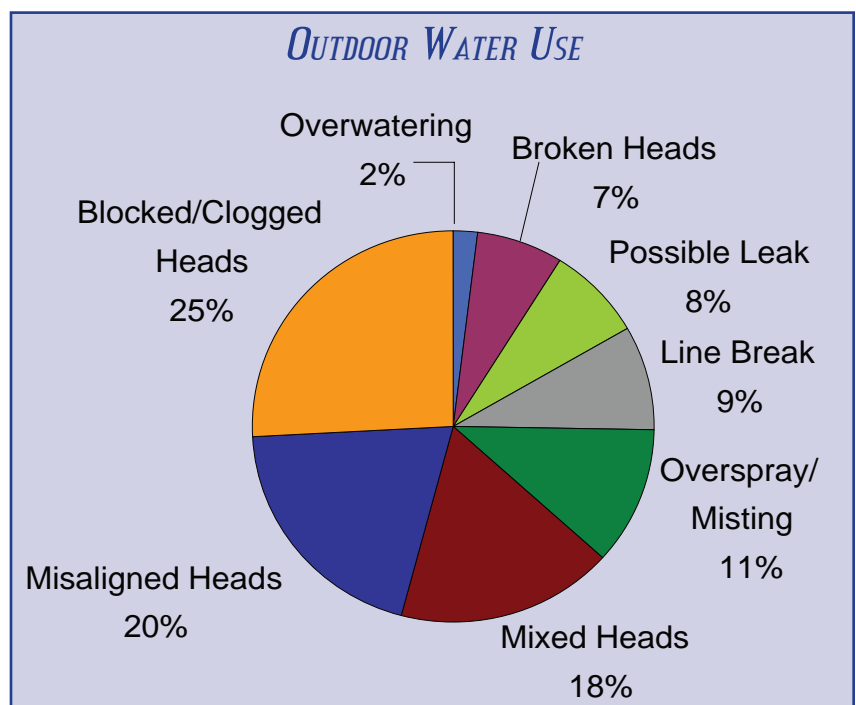


Outdoors

Free and Easy Ideas

- Water your lawn only when needed, 2-3 days a week at most. If you step on your lawn and the grass springs back, it does **not** need to be watered.
- Water early in the morning when temperatures and winds are at their lowest levels to reduce evaporation. LVMWD has a prohibition for landscape watering between 10AM and 5PM.
- Turn off your sprinklers when it rains. Rain sensors and shutoff switches are inexpensive and can be retrofitted to almost any system.
- See the indoor water conservation checklist for ways to capture otherwise wasted water to use for watering potted plants.
- Don't water the gutter. Runoff is wasteful and can carry pollutants to creeks.
- LVMWD studies found that 69% of district water is used for irrigation and that irrigation inefficiencies accounted for more runoff than overwatering. See the chart and check your irrigation monthly for:
 - spray heads blocked by plant growth or clogged with debris
 - poorly aimed nozzles/misaligned and tilted heads/incorrect arc (adjust at head)
 - mixed heads (each station should only have one kind of head)
 - overspray (adjust flow through the valve, use different nozzles, or adjust the flow control screw on the nozzle itself)
 - broken heads (water leaks from the seal around the pop-up stem), broken parts (some expense)
- Other things to check for: heads that weep even when off (a faulty valve or the lack of check valves), sunken heads in a lawn (may need taller risers or turf may need dethatching – some expense)
- Reset your irrigation timers four times a year as the seasons change. LVMWD customers tend to overwater each fall by 25% or more because they don't readjust at the end of September when solar radiation is already halfway to winter lows. Evapotranspiration (also known as ET) and the percent adjustment for your irrigation controller are posted daily at <http://www.lvmwd.com/index.aspx?page=171>. This page also links to the helpful Simple Irrigation Scheduler.
- Use a trigger nozzle on hoses.
- Teach your children that hoses and sprinklers are not toys. Restrict or eliminate use of hose-end water toys.
- Use a broom to clean driveways and other hardscape. LVMWD has prohibited hosing down hardscape, except where a public health or safety issue exists.
- Schedule each individual zone in your irrigation system to account for the type of plant material, sprinkler, sun exposure, and soil type for the specific area. The same watering schedule rarely applies to all zones in a system.
- Remove weeds and unsightly plants that compete for available water.
- Maintain sharp blades on pruning shears and lawn mowers to reduce plant water loss.
- Aerate lawns and topdress with compost periodically to decrease compaction and improve penetration of water, air and nutrients into root zones. You can tell your lawn needs aeration when water puddles or runs off after only a few minutes of watering.
- Avoid installing water features. Even recycled water evaporates.



Inexpensive or moderate effort

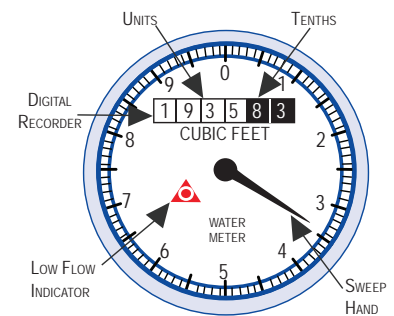
- Mulch flower and garden areas as well as tree and shrub bases. LVMWD has free Rancho Las Virgenes Community Compost you can use as mulch.
- Avoid planting turf or installing spray irrigation in areas that are difficult to water without runoff such as in isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways and on slopes.
- At least once a year, confirm that all irrigation systems are distributing water uniformly and inspect, repair and/ or adjust subsurface or drip watering systems.
- Immediately shut off irrigation system(s) and adjust whenever irrigation water falls or runs onto hard surfaces such as sidewalks, patios, streets or driveways.
- Repair all water leaks as soon as detected, including hose couplings.
- When buying plants, select those that have low water requirements.
- Cover pools, spas and other water features when not in use to minimize evaporation. A good pool cover will save energy by up to 90% and reduce water loss by up to 70%.
- Seasonally check pools and spas for leaks, which can lose up to 1000 gallons a day. Symptoms of leaks include water level drop over 2" per week in the summer (with automatic filling off) or increased need for chemicals. A professional may be needed to find and repair a leak.
- The more frequently you clean swimming pool filters the less often you'll need to replace pool water.
- Replace lawns with native grasses that need 50-75% less water than common turf grasses.
- Determine specific water requirements for all existing landscape plants and water accordingly. Plants with the same water needs should be planted and irrigated together so you don't have to overwater some to give the rest enough.
- Water all plants deeply but infrequently to encourage deeper, healthier rooting.
- Install drip irrigation for trees, shrubs, slopes and narrow spaces.
- Replace pool filters with newer water conserving models. A single back-flush with older models uses 180 to 250 gallons of water.
- Harvest water from rainfall for landscape irrigation purposes. Systems can range from rain barrels to underground cisterns.

Good Water Saving Investments

- Install a weather-based irrigation controller and efficient nozzles. LVMWD offers rebates.*
- Reduce the amount of lawn you have, especially where it isn't used for play. Turf requires about 5 feet of water a year while we only get about one foot of rain annually.
- Plant drought tolerant and native plants. A Santa Monica study found a 90% reduction in water use, 63% reduction in yard waste and an 81% reduction in labor with a full landscape conversion to drought tolerant plants.
- Employ an irrigation contractor who is a California Landscape Contractors Association Certified Water Manager, or an EPA WaterSense partner. (See web addresses on back page.) Also ask if he or she is factory trained on your irrigation controller.
- Employ a certified landscape-irrigation auditor to conduct a thorough and comprehensive check for efficiency of water application. He or she can inspect and tune your system to ensure optimal efficiency.

Use the Water Meter To Detect Costly Leaks

Periodically checking the reading on the water meter could help you find small leaks or problems that wastew water but could affect the amount of your bill. The water meter is a good "detective". It can indicate a leak, the relative size of the loss and how much water is being used by your appliances. Most meters record water usage just as your car's odometer records mileage.



Certified Water-Conservation Irrigation Specialists

California Landscape Contractors Association:
<http://www.clca.us/water/> - Left panel click on "Find My Certified Water Professional"

EPA WaterSense:
<http://www.epa.gov/WaterSense/> - Top menu, roll over "Outdoor" for the drop down menu

Irrigation Association:
<http://www.irrigation.org/> - Top right click on "Find A Certified Professional"