



Commercial Hydronic and Hot Water Equipment Sales and Support

4723 Tidewater Avenue • Oakland, CA 94601 • 800-786-6847 • Fax: 510-434-3141 • 2hsc.com

Drought

You can't tell that we are in a drought when all we have to do is turn on the faucet and out comes the elixir of life. I'm not alone in loving the invigorating luxury of a hot shower splashing over my face and body. But if we go out and visit our state's reservoirs, the true nature of our serious predicament is revealed. You will see the normal level shore line, then look to find the current water level far below. <http://ca.gov/drought>.

Governor Jerry Brown has declared a state of emergency. Water allocations to agriculture which normally consume 80% of California's water supply have been terminated for 2014. Agriculture is pumping from underground aquifers so we have food on our tables. The trouble is that this is not a sustainable solution. The aquifers are lowering and some running dry. The land is subsiding and it will never recharge to previous water storage levels.

Most local water districts have water conservation measures. <http://library.ucr.edu/wrca/grants/districts.html>. Check with your local districts for the level of restrictions and incentives. Look for rebates for water saving washing machines, toilets, dishwashers, and hot water recirculation pumps. Some water districts are providing incentives for people to stop watering their lawns. The new "green" is "brown". Let the grass lawns go brown.

What else can we do?

Be vigilant about turning off continuously running water.

Fix all drips and leaks. Toilet flappers, faucets, and irrigation systems are the most common sources of leaks. When irrigating, use soaker hose or drip irrigation for your landscaping with a timer. Water at the coolest times in multiple 15 minute intervals in the early morning and in the evening to prevent run off, evaporation and allow the ability for the water to soak in (only on the days your water district allows).

When using a hose, only use it with a shut off, so the water used is applied where and when you want it. Use a broom to clean decks and drive ways and resist the temptation of hosing them off. Try using car washes more often, they recycle grey water and are more efficient than hose washing at home.

Don't run water continuously when shaving. Fill the bowl with water or use short bursts of water as needed (however, short bursts of hot water is not recommended if your water heater is tankless. Each burst is an ignition cycle which is short cycling and is inefficient combustion and wears out the heater). Single handle faucets can inadvertently cause a tankless heater to cycle even when moving the handle to cold.

Cover swimming pools with swimming pool covers. This saves energy, chemicals and saves water due to evaporation. Encourage golf courses to use grey or partially conditioned water for their irrigation and to not use potable water. Replace older water guzzling fixtures such as washing machines, and dishwashers. Install low flow shower heads; standard code is 2.5 gpm. Instead of 10-15 minute showers, take 5 minute showers. It's not luxurious, but for most people it's enough time to clean themselves.

Turn off the shower while soaping up and turn on the shower to rinse. But the bottom line is to do what we have to do for sanitary purposes. In the 1977-78 drought we learned to take showers with a bucket, and use the "grey water" to water plants or pour the grey water directly into the toilet as flush water. Most toilets will flush when at least one gallon is poured quickly in the bowl.

Install a hot water recirculation system.

You don't need to wait for hot water when one turns on the hot water faucet. An everyday water-wasting occurrence is turning on the hot water faucet and letting the water run down the drain until the actual hot water reaches the faucet or shower. If possible place a bucket or pan under the fixture and meter the water until hot water arrives at the fixture. Knowing the amount of water used can help you realize how much water is wasted and can be saved. If there is a dedicated recirculation return line, the best available product is [Taco's Smart Plus pump](#). The Smart Plus pump learns people's hot water usage patterns and requires no programming. If there isn't a dedicated recirculation line, try [Taco's Genie](#) or the [Hot Link products](#). The Genie and Hot Link systems move the cold water that is in the hot water line and injects it into the cold water line until the hot water arrives at the fixture. See www.2hsc.com or http://www.taco-hvac.com/products/systems/instant_hot_water/genie/index.html. These systems save thousands of gallons of water per year. The Taco Genie is a good option for tankless water heaters. See also, [Taco Flood Breaker](#) and [Wags Valve](#).

Friends and neighbors, Californians, let's join together to save our state from this most serious water shortage, drought. Our reserves are so depleted that the respite of rain or even a good winter will not pull us out of drought for many years. Water is the difference between life and death, and it is felt most immediately by our State's wild life and forests. We all have to do our part. Please be diligent and remember that we are in a drought, every time we use this elixir of life.

John T. Grose, HSC, 800-786-6847