

Household Water Audit



An audit is a tool used in various platforms allowing its user to critically look at the organization's efficiency being audited and point out areas that can be improved upon. As the name would imply, a household water audit is a self-assessment of an individual's water usage to find ways to improve efficiency and areas to reduce waste. Water is a precious resource that is crucial to us all, and we mustn't be wasteful with it. In some areas of the world, people walk quite a long way to obtain it. In other regions, wars are fought for control of it. The lifeblood of every community depends on this valuable resource. As our community grows and more people choose to make Cherokee County their home, water demand increases more and more. Growth and change in our communities are

inevitable; however, if we are good stewards of our watershed, we can protect this natural resource for generations to come. You can obtain a water audit at our main office at 140 West Main St. in downtown Canton, along with other invaluable literature on water saving tips and tricks. We recommend these websites as additional resources - <https://www.watercalculator.org/> & <https://northgeorgiawater.org/water-audit/>. These websites allow you to complete the household water audit online interactively.

Before you begin the audit, it is essential to verify that your home is leak-free. You can check this by reading your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is running. If the meter does not read the same, there is a hidden leak. When preparing to complete the audit, you will need a recent water bill, food dye/leak tablets, and at least four identical cylindrical containers, and a ruler in the event you irrigate your yard. The first section in the water audit guides you through finding the water usage on your bill and then plugging that information into the formula to calculate the water usage per person. Then compare your usage to the recommended gallons per person to see how efficient/inefficient you are. Next, put a couple of drops of food coloring or leak dye tablets in the reservoir of your toilet (located on top of the bowl). Wait 20 minutes without flushing and inspect the bowl. If the water has changed color since the beginning of the test, there is a leak.

In many cases, the leak results from a leaking flapper, which you can replace yourself. If this doesn't fix the problem, consider contacting a plumber. Lastly, if you have an irrigation system, place the cylindrical containers evenly around one zone of your system and let it run for 15 minutes. Measure the amount collected using the ruler and multiply by 4 to get the total number of inches per hour your system uses in that zone. Repeat the process for each zone. In metro Atlanta, outdoor plants need about 1 inch per week.

In addition to looking at your direct water usage, the watercalculator.org audit also discusses your indirect water usage. Indirect water usage is a less familiar term to most people but has a much larger impact than you might think. Did you know water is required to produce electricity and in the refining process of petroleum? What about the production of fabrics and plastics? According to USGS (US Geological Survey), it is a mindboggling concept to think about, but the hamburger you ate for lunch took between 4,000 and 18,000 gallons of water to produce. All of the usage, both direct and indirect, is referred to as your water footprint, and all of us need to take a critical look at our water footprint and see what habits we can change to be more efficient with our consumption. After all, our responsibility is to be good stewards of this precious resource for future and coming generations.

***If you take the time to complete an audit, please email us at ccwsaea@gmail.com to let us know and enter to win a pack of water conservation playing cards. Also, just as a reminder, if you have a particular topic or question you would like us to address, please email us.**

