

Ideas for your €100 Water Conservation Grant

Using water carefully helps preserve and protect Ireland's water and the environment – small changes can make a big difference!

Be smart about water usage. It might reduce your costs.

How can I save water in my home?

Let's look at the **top 4 ways** that water is used **inside** the home, and some things you can do to reduce your usage:

1. Toilets

Toilets account for almost one third (**30%**) of water used in the house.

 Put the €100 towards installing a **dual-flush toilet** and you could reduce water usage by up to 16%.

 You could buy a **water displacement device**. These reduce a toilet flush from 9 litres to 6 litres - up to a 9% reduction in water usage.

2. Baths and taps

Baths and taps account for about one fifth (**21%**) of water used in the house.

 Your grant could be used **towards low-flow aerators**. This is a device to reduce the flow of water from a tap without decreasing the pressure. These low cost devices, like spray aerators, can reduce your tap usage by 10%.

 In 2014, Irish households spent, on average, €200-700 heating water. It's a good idea to buy **pre-slit foam pipe insulation** – this pipe insulation means that there is no need to run the tap to get hot water and the water stays hotter for longer.

3. Washing clothes and washing up

Washing your clothes and doing the wash up accounts for about one fifth (**21%**) of the water you use in your house.

 You could put your €100 grant towards buying a water efficient washing machine or dishwasher. Efficient washing machines can reduce water usage by 3%.

4. Showers

About **12%** of the water used in the house is used on showers.

 You could buy a new **low-flow shower head**, which can reduce shower usage by up to **12%**.

Don't forget about the **garden!** Around 7% of a home's water usage is outdoors.

You could use the €100 grant to...

 Buy a water butt, a large barrel for catching and storing rainwater - this can be used to divert rainwater for watering plants.

 Buy bark, gravel and woodchip to help stop water evaporating from flowerbeds.

 Buy a rose head watering can rather than using a hose - it takes a bit longer, but it uses a lot less water!

How can I use the grant to reduce leakage in my home?

Even the smallest leaks can result in a huge waste of water.

Did you know?

Irish Water estimates that 6% of all the water it produces is lost through household leaks. About half of these are inside the house. Faulty toilet cisterns were found to be the most common source of internal leaks.

A dripping tap can waste over 3,000 litres of water per year!

So you could.... put your €100 grant towards getting your plumbing fixed.

 Get a plumber to fix any leaking taps, plumbing fixtures, cisterns or pipes.

 To give you an idea, you could buy food colouring to check for toilet leaks – put colouring in the toilet cistern; if a toilet is leaking, colouring will appear within 30 minutes.

Where can I get more information?

www.water.ie
(Irish Water)

www.nfgws.ie
(National Federation of Group Water Schemes)

www.epa.ie
(Environmental Protection Agency)

I have a private well - how can I use the grant?

Testing your well water regularly is vital to make sure your drinking water quality is high. Patients with VTEC (a form of E.coli) are more than four times more likely than the general population to have consumed untreated private well water.



You can use the grant towards the cost of **getting your water quality tested** - preferably once a year for bacterial contamination (including E.Coli) and every three years for possible chemical contamination. Well water is most likely to be affected by pollution following a period of heavy rain.



Use your grant towards **maintenance or servicing of your well**. This can reduce the risk of contamination and make sure your well and well pump work properly. You could:

- o install or repair a well pump - a faulty pump can drive up electricity bills;
- o seal a disused well; and
- o install a new sealed well cap to lessen the risk of pollution.

For more information on testing water quality or maintaining private wells, visit:
www.epa.ie/water/dw/hhinfo

I have a septic tank – how can I use the grant?

You can use the grant towards the cost of maintaining your septic tank or other domestic waste water treatment system. Without maintenance you may end up having to replace them, which can be very expensive. A system that doesn't work properly can contaminate groundwater and private wells. Contaminated drinking water can contain bacteria, germs, bugs and harmful chemicals that can cause serious illness and damage the environment.

The gathering of effluent and soil contamination around septic tanks can be a danger to public health, including exposing humans and animals to disease. This can also cause unpleasant odours.



Use your grant towards having your septic tank or domestic waste water treatment system maintained and serviced, or for getting it pumped out (de-sludged) regularly.

For more information on septic tanks or domestic waste water treatment systems, visit:
www.epa.ie/water/wastewater/info

Contact your local authority for a list of permitted contractors who service or de-sludge domestic waste water treatment systems.

I am worried about lead in my drinking water – how can I use the grant?

You may have lead in your drinking water if you live in a house built up to and including the 1970s. Lead pipes are usually dark grey or black (unless painted) with a dull coating and the joints appear to be 'swollen'. A simple way of identifying lead is to scrape the pipe gently with a coin or a knife – if a shiny silver strip is revealed, then the pipe is lead.



You could use the €100 grant towards... getting your drinking water tested for lead, or hiring a plumber to check for lead pipes.

Use a certified laboratory for testing as it's important to get reliable test results and tests can be influenced by a number of factors. The Irish National Accreditation Board assesses and certifies laboratories and lists approved laboratories on its website (www.inab.ie). It is a good idea to ring a few laboratories as prices can vary.

For more information on lead in drinking water, visit:
www.hse.ie/water (Health Service Executive)
www.water.ie/lead (Irish Water)

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