

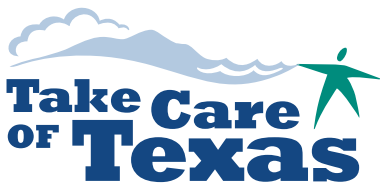
# Do Your Part!

Take Care of Texas in  
your own home.

Save money and the environment,  
and keep our state beautiful!



Take Care of Texas—It's the only one we've got.



Texas is a beautiful and richly diverse state. Its population is booming and many parts of its economy are expanding. But all this growth has also generated additional environmental challenges. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) works closely with governmental entities, industries, and businesses to protect and improve the environment of the state.

We are also asking individuals to make a personal commitment to do their part. Take Care of Texas is an effort to get all Texans to take some simple steps that will go far toward improving air and water quality, conserving water and energy, and keeping Texas clean and beautiful.

Here you will find 25 tips to help you Take Care of Texas.



# Around the House

## 1 Turn Off the Lights



By turning off lights when not needed, you can reduce your energy consumption and help reduce air emissions. Not using four 60-watt incandescent light bulbs for two hours a day can also save about \$15 a year.

## 2 Adjust Your Thermostat

Using a programmable air-conditioning thermostat or simply adjusting your thermostat during overnight hours or when no one is at home can reduce your cooling and heating costs. To reduce energy consumption, set the thermostat at 78 degrees or higher in the summer, and at 68 degrees or lower in the winter.

## 3 Use Compact Fluorescent Lights

Compact fluorescent light bulbs use 67% less energy than incandescent bulbs and can last up to ten times longer, with an average lifespan of 6,000 hours per bulb. Replacing the incandescent bulbs in your five most frequently used light fixtures with compact fluorescents can save you more than \$60 a year in electricity.



## 4 Upgrade Your Home Cooling and Heating System

In Texas, cooling and heating accounts for about 45% of annual home energy expenses. By using a properly sized Energy Star cooling and heating system, you can further reduce your home energy consumption and help improve air quality.



## 5 Weatherize Your House

Using proper insulation in your home and sealing off air leaks will help maintain a comfortable indoor temperature, while reducing energy consumption and saving money.

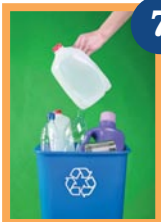


# In the Kitchen

## 6 Trade Up to Energy Star Appliances

Installing a more efficient dishwasher will reduce both water and energy consumption in your home. An Energy Star dishwasher is about 25% more efficient than a conventional dishwasher, and will save about 800 gallons of water per year.

## 7 Recycle



On average, each Texan generates about seven pounds of garbage every day. By recycling paper, metal, plastic, and other materials, you can reduce waste, help conserve energy, and preserve our state's natural resources.

## Collect Your Food Scraps, Oil, and Grease

A clogged drain at home can be a real nuisance. Clogged sewer lines can cause overflows that pollute nearby creeks and streams. By using strainers to catch food scraps and collecting cooking grease in

a container for disposal, you can keep fats, oils, and grease from clogging up your home's drain pipes or the city's sewer line.



## 9 Cook Efficiently

Texans can help reduce energy consumption and air emissions by making sure that their pots and pans are not smaller in diameter than their stove's burners. A 6-inch pot on an 8-inch burner wastes

over 40% of the burner's heat, as well as the energy it takes to produce that heat.

## 10 Adjust the Setting on Your Refrigerator

Of all household appliances, refrigerators consume the most electricity, accounting for 9% of an average home's total energy consumption. To save money and energy, and improve air quality, keep your refrigerator's thermostat set between 37 and 40 degrees. And when buying a new refrigerator, make it an energy-efficient Energy Star model.

# In the Bathroom

## 11 Fix Leaks

Check your faucets, and fix any leak you find. A faucet leaking at a rate of one drop per second can waste up to 1,661 gallons of water per year. If every household fixed just one leaky faucet, we could reduce water use in Texas by over 13 billion gallons a year.

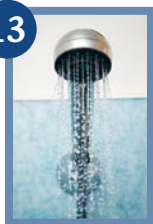


## 12 Wash Full Loads, with Cold Water

Washing full loads as opposed to partial loads of laundry can save an average household more than 3,400 gallons of water each year. Using cold water for laundry instead of hot or warm water can save the average household more than \$30 annually.

## Install Low-Flow Showerheads and Faucet Aerators

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Installing a low-flow showerhead can be the single most effective water-saving step that you can take inside your home—reducing water consumption by 25 to 60%, and saving up to \$145 each year on energy costs. A faucet aerator can cut water consumption in half.

## 14 Lower Your Water Heater Thermostat

For maximum efficiency, you can turn the thermostat on your water heater to 120 degrees, and you'll still have a hot shower waiting for you.

## Invest in a New Low-Flow Toilet


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Toilets are by far the main source of water use in the home, accounting for approximately 30% of residential indoor water consumption. If you replace an older toilet with a high-efficiency toilet that uses 1.3 gallons of water per flush, you can save 4,000 gallons of water per year, the equivalent to a 17-year drinking supply for one person.



# In the Yard

## 16 Use Native Plants



Plants that are native to Texas aren't only beautiful; they typically require less water, pesticides, fertilizers, and maintenance—saving you time and money. The deep root systems of many native plants also increase the soil's capacity to store water, reducing runoff.

## 17 Try Composting


Yard trimmings make up 20% of the waste generated by Texans each year. Instead of throwing them out with the garbage, you can recycle these materials by composting them. Compost can serve as a soil conditioner that will help improve your garden and reduce your water usage.

## Use An Electric Lawn Mower 18

For each hour of operation, one gas-powered lawn mower emits 11 times more air pollution than a new car. Forty million American lawn mowers consume 200 million gallons of gasoline per year, and gas-powered garden-tool emissions account for an estimated 5% of the nation's air pollution.



## 19 Collect and Use Rainwater



Rainwater can be used to water your lawn, plants, flowers, trees, and shrubs. By collecting rainwater for outdoor use during the peak summer months, you can save 1,300 gallons of water. If all Texas households collected rainwater for

their watering needs, we could keep over 10 billion gallons of water in our aquifers, lakes, and rivers.

## 20 Plant Shade Trees

Planting deciduous trees on the south and west sides of your house and around your air conditioner will help save you energy by keeping your home shady and cool in the summer, yet allow the sun to shine through windows to warm your home in the winter.

# Out and About

## 21 Maintain Your Vehicle

With proper maintenance—such as changing your oil, checking your tire pressure, and replacing filters—you can reduce your car's emissions and improve gas mileage up to 5%, which can save you up to 35 cents per gallon of fuel used.

## 22 Recycle Used Motor Oil

Whenever you change your oil or other vehicle fluids at home, make sure you recycle them. NEVER pour used motor oil down storm drains, because the drains will carry the oil directly to Texas waterways. The used oil from one oil change can contaminate one million gallons of fresh water: a years' supply for 50 people. Visit [www.cleanup.org](http://www.cleanup.org) to find a recycling center near you.



## 23 Buy a “Cleaner” Vehicle

The next time you're shopping for a vehicle, consider the benefits of one with a high fuel-economy rating. A fuel-efficient vehicle will reduce air emissions and reduce fuel costs. In some communities, the TCEQ offers assistance for individuals who need to repair or replace older vehicles. Visit [www.takecareoftexas.org](http://www.takecareoftexas.org) for more information.

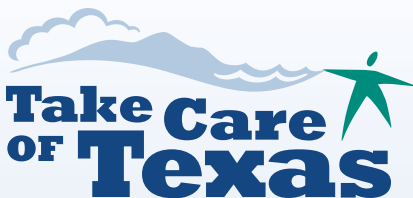
## 24 Drive Less

To reduce vehicle air emissions, you can carpool with a co-worker, use public transit, or simply combine errands when possible. By ride-sharing every day, commuters can save up to \$3,000 a year on gas, insurance, parking, and wear and tear on their cars.

## 25 Drive the Speed Limit

By slowing down and avoiding aggressive driving, you can improve your fuel economy by 5% if driving in town, or by up to 33% on the highway. Slowing down and keeping to the speed limit also helps to reduce air emissions.





For more facts and sources,  
and to receive e-mail  
notification of updates, visit  
the Take Care of Texas web site at:  
[www.takecareoftexas.org](http://www.takecareoftexas.org)



Small Business and Environmental Assistance Division  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

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