

Be In the Know... on County News and Services

Hillsborough County offers several ways to keep up with the latest on County government events and news. Now you can sign up to receive RSS feeds (County headlines sent to you as they are released) to keep you informed of the latest event and meeting announcements and news releases. Go to the County's website at: www.hillsboroughcounty.org and click on the "Sign up for RSS Feeds" links under the News section and under the Meetings and Events section.

Another option is to follow Hillsborough County on Twitter and be notified about County's news. Go to [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com/HCNNews), a free service, and click to follow Hillsborough County @HCNews. With both options, you will be able to view notices via your computer, cell phone or other wireless device instantaneously.

The County's website provides several other features to keep you informed on County services. Here's a list of just a few services you can find:

- on the Code Enforcement page, you can view a Code Enforcement "Tip of the Month" to help you learn the ins and outs of the County's codes and how the department enforces them.
- on the Procurement Services page, you can sign up to become an official vendor and be notified of projects as they come up for bid.
- on the Planning & Growth Management page, you can research contractor licenses which the department issues.
- on the Animal Services page, you can see photos of animals currently up for adoption.
- on the Real Estate page, you can research the status of ongoing or planned construction and capital projects that the County is working on in your area.

And that's only the beginning. Several other online services are easily accessible by clicking on the "Online Services" pull-down menu on the home page.

Hillsborough County government offers many ways to keep its residents informed. So sign up or get online today, and get in the know.

Shower Your Bathroom With Water Savings

Get a FREE water-saving showerhead, as well as low-flow aerators for kitchen and bathroom faucets, at Water Resource Services' three customer service centers. The centers are open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Northwest

15610 Premiere Drive in Northdale (off Northdale Boulevard, west of Dale Mabry Highway)

South-Central

Brandon Crossings Shopping Center (southwest corner of State Road 60 and Falkenburg Road)

SouthShore

Hillsborough County SouthShore Regional Service Center, 410 30th Street S.E., Ruskin (just north of State Road 674, west of Interstate 75)

Water Conservation (Continued from Front)

maintains our environment, cools and heats buildings, and contributes to the balance of nature.

So why do people take water for granted? Perhaps it's because at least 70 percent of the Earth's surface is covered with water, so much so that our planet appears blue from space. The reality is that only one percent of that water is fresh water that's available to drink.

Although water seems to be abundant in Florida, the resources are not always readily available, and there is a delicate balance that has to be maintained between water users and natural resource protection.

Hillsborough County Water Resource Services encourages water conservation through educational campaigns, water restrictions, partnerships with other agencies and construction of reclaimed water systems. Residents have paid attention, dropping the average daily water use per person from 146 gallons in 1989, to the current level of 94 gallons per person, per day.

What else can you do? Keep up the good work! Follow the water restrictions. Also try the conservation tips in this newsletter. With your help, we can make a difference when it comes to conserving this vital resource.

Conservation Tips For The Home

- Fix leaks! A dripping faucet can waste anywhere from several gallons a day, to several hundred.
- Replace worn or poorly-fitting toilet flappers, which can waste up to 200 gallons a day. Flappers – the rubber valves inside toilet tanks - deteriorate over time because of use, cleaning chemicals and the disinfectants used to treat potable water. Place a dye tablet or a couple of drops of food coloring in the toilet tank; if the color shows up in the bowl a few minutes later, the flapper needs to be replaced. (Avoid staining the bowl by flushing immediately after this test.)
- Save up to six gallons of water each time you turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth or when you're shaving.
- Install low-flow showerheads, keep showers to under five minutes, fit faucets with low-flow aerators and replace older toilets with low-flow models to add up to big savings.
- Use your dishwasher for full loads only. When doing laundry, wash full loads only, or if your washer has variable settings, adjust the water level to the minimum required. Consider installing a water-efficient, front-loading clothes washing machine.
- Avoid using the toilet as a trash can. Throw tissues, wrappers, bugs and other items in the waste basket.
- Learn to read your water meter. If the numbers are different after a period of time when no water has been used, you have a leak.
- Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave, not under running water.
- Replace leaky drain plugs in sinks and bathtubs.



Rainfall Varies, But Region Shares Drinking Water Sources

Water Resource Services staff are frequently asked why our area is considered to be in a drought, when the rainfall totals in the weather section of the newspaper don't seem to be that far off normal.

Here is an explanation from Granville Kinsman Jr., the hydrologic data manager for the Southwest Florida Water Management District:

Rainfall varies from location to location. The data from the rain gauge at Tampa International Airport, which is published daily in the Tampa Tribune, is not representative of the larger regional rainfall patterns of west-central Florida.

To get a true picture of the drought, we need to examine the region as a whole. SWFWMD monitors more than 130 rainfall gauges throughout its 16-county area.

The four central counties in the district (Pinellas, Pasco, Hillsborough, and Polk) received an average of 45.97 inches during 2008, compared to the region's historical average of 52.78 inches. When looking over the last three years, our 16-county district has accumulated a rainfall deficit of 26.5 inches.

The impacts of this regional deficit are seen in our water bodies. For example, the Hillsborough and Alafia rivers, two essential water supply sources for the region, are critically low. Based on the most recent readings, the flow in these rivers is now lower than 98 percent of historical February measurements.

All 16 counties within the district are experiencing below-normal groundwater conditions and all of the major rivers are experiencing extremely low flows. The entire region depends on these highly-impacted surface water and groundwater sources for water supply.

With climatologists predicting an even drier-than-normal spring in Florida, it's vital that we all do our part to conserve water.

Watering Restriction Reminders

It's easy to remember your watering day. Just follow the guide below:

- Monday--addresses ending in 0 or 1
- Tuesday--addresses ending in 2 or 3
- Wednesday--addresses ending in 4 or 5
- Thursday--addresses ending in 6 or 7
- Friday--addresses ending in 8 or 9, locations with no addresses (common areas, entry areas), and locations with mixed addresses (office complexes, shopping centers.)

Water before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m.

For more information about the Extreme Water Shortage declaration, you may:

- *Call (813) 275-7094 for a recorded message;*
- *Visit www.hillsboroughcounty.org/water and click on the "Restrictions & Conservation" button; or*
- *Call the Water Conservation Team at (813) 274-6800 during regular business hours.*

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY COMMUNICATOR

Published every month by the Communications Department to inform residents about the programs, services and activities of their County government.

For more information, call the Hillsborough Information Line at (813) 272-5900, or visit the County's website at: www.hillsboroughcounty.org

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COMMUNICATOR

Keeping You Informed About County Government

April 2009

Drought Underscores Importance of Water Conservation Month

Florida is the only state in the nation that sets aside an entire month in recognition of the need to conserve one of our most precious natural resources – water.

April is celebrated as "Water Conservation Month" because it's typically the driest month of the year in our state, and water demand is often at its highest as residents put in new plantings for spring and water their lawns to make the grass green.

This year, the importance of conserving is underscored by an ongoing drought, and the escalation of the drought status by Southwest Florida Water Management District to an Extreme Water Shortage.

There is no substitute for water. Living creatures and plants need it to survive. We use it to quench our

thirst, keep our bodies in good working order, to bathe, to raise our food and to prepare our meals. We use it for transportation, recreation, and to make the clothes, products and other goods we use every day. Water



Recent photo of Tampa Bay Water's nearly-empty 15-billion gallon reservoir

(Continued on Inside)

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