THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Water Department

Warm Weather Tips for Outdoor Water Conservation
By Luis Generoso, Water Resources Manager, City of San Diego Water Department

SAN DIEGO – The heat is on! Summer in Southern California means little rainfall and very warm temperatures. So, San Diego relies on its residents to conserve their water use during these arid days. According to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, a typical single-family home that doesn't conserve uses 72.5 gallons of water per day. A typical single-family home that does conserve uses 49.6 gallons of water per day. That's a savings of nearly 23 gallons, more than 30 percent. These savings can be attributed mostly to a variety of indoor fixtures such as ultra-low flush toilets, energy and water efficient clothes washing machines and water-saving showerheads.

The City of San Diego's Water Conservation Program congratulates San Diegans for taking steps to save water inside of the home, and encourages residents to continue this effort outdoors.

"Studies show that about 60 percent of the water used by families goes towards outdoor things like gardens and pools," said Chris Robbins, Supervising Management Analyst for the City of San Diego's Water Conservation Program. "This percentage can especially increase during the summer months. This is why we want to help people discover additional ways to lower their water use and utility bills by offering tips and free landscape water conservation programs."

Following are some steps residents can take to save water outdoors during the summer heat.

❑ Adjust the timer on your sprinkler system to provide your lawn and plants with the appropriate amount of water. It's easy to over irrigate during warm months. To create a free customized watering schedule, check out the free Landscape Watering Calculator on the City's website at www.sandiego.gov/water. It's also a good idea to make sure sprinklers are aimed appropriately to prevent wasted water on driveways and sidewalks.

❑ Use a "mulching" attachment on your mower when mowing your lawn. This allows your mower to cut-up the grass into smaller pieces you can leave on the lawn, instead of bagging the clippings and sending them out with the trash or green waste. Mulching the clippings also helps to nourish your lawn and reduce evaporation, keeping moisture in the soil and lawn longer than if it were unprotected.

❑ Plant low water use and drought tolerant plants in your garden. For a list of these plants, visit www.bewaterwise.com or download a free brochure on the Water Department's website at www.sandiego.gov/water/conservation. You can also visit the Water Conservation Garden for tips on choosing and maintaining healthy water-wise plants that are both drought tolerant and beautiful. Located on the campus of Cuyamaca College, the garden hosts seminars and free tours. For more information on the garden and its special events, call (619) 660-0614 or visit www.thegarden.org.

❑ When possible, wash your car on your lawn instead of your driveway. Make the most of what would be wasted water by allowing your lawn to absorb the excess water. Another option is to take your car to a professional car wash that recycles the wash water.

❑ Use a broom instead of a hose to clean up driveways and backyard patios. Outdoor parties and barbecues are popular activities during the summer months, so try sweeping away the mess to save water and protect the environment by preventing unwanted debris from entering your storm drain.

❑ Cover your pool when it's not being used to prevent water loss through evaporation and to keep it clean. It's also a good idea to fill pools, spas and fountains during off-peak hours (8 p.m. – 6 a.m.) and on off-peak days (Friday – Sunday).

❑ Check your outdoor faucets for leaks. Or, schedule a free indoor and outdoor water use analysis with the City's Residential Water Survey Program. Single family and multi-family (up to 8 units) residents who are customers of the Water Department are eligible for this free service. Participants receive useful water saving tips and fixtures for their home. For more information, call (619) 570-1999.

Businesses can also benefit from saving water during the hot summer months. Following are a couple of suggestions for business owners and employees who would like to help their company conserve water while lowering utility bills.

❑ Schedule a free analysis of your outdoor water use with the City's free Commercial Landscape Survey Program. Commercial, industrial and institutional customers who own or manage a business with 1-acre of landscape or more are eligible to participate. Past participants have been able to achieve an average 20% savings on their water bills. To schedule a survey or for more info, call (619) 570-1999.

❑ Get free point-of-purchase vouchers of up to $500 for cooling tower conductivity controllers (which automatically monitor the concentration of dissolved solids and pH levels for cooling towers). Qualified businesses can participate in the San Diego County Water Authority's Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Voucher Program. These vouchers are used to offset the cost of new, water efficient conductivity controllers. For more information, call 1-800-986-4538 or visit www.sdcwa.org.

The City of San Diego's Water Conservation Program is available to help residents and businesses save water both indoors and outdoors during summer's hottest months, and throughout the year.

The Water Conservation Program reduces water demand through promoting or providing incentives for the installation of hardware that provides permanent water savings, and by providing services and information to help San Diegans make better decisions about water use. For more information about Water Conservation, visit www.sandiego.gov/water or call 619.515.3500.

###