

# Kadena Air Base



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[News](#) > [Water conservation efforts needed](#)

## Water conservation efforts needed

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Courtesy of the 718th Civil Engineer Squadron

9/11/2008 - **KADENA AB, Japan** -- Water levels in Okinawa are approaching critical levels, and members of Team Kadena are being asked to do their part to help conserve this precious resource before strict rationing measures are put in place. Okinawa's drinking water supply is highly dependent on rainfall, which is captured in a series of reservoirs spread across the island, treated, and fed into the water supply system. If rain doesn't fill the reservoirs, the water system must cut back the supply.

Okinawa averages 84 inches of rain a year. Most of this precipitation arrives during the monsoon season from April to June and the typhoon season from July to October. So far in 2008, only 33 inches of rain has fallen on Okinawa.

The reservoirs that are the backbone of the island's water supply system are currently filled to 64% of their capacity. Over the past years, the average reservoir level during the month of August was 90%. With typhoon season half over and the dry season approaching, Okinawa may be facing water restrictions due to below average precipitation.

A ban on washing cars in housing areas and on outside watering has been in place since 1999. If the reservoir levels continue to drop, further water conservation measures may be put into place. In order to conserve our water resources and prevent mandatory water rationing, the base community is encouraged to use the following water conservation tips.

- Only use your dishwasher when you have a full load. Dishwashers use four gallons of water per load.
- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth or shaving. Leaving the faucet running for 3 minutes can waste 8 gallons of water.
- While showering, reduce the time the water is running. Turn off the water while soaping and scrubbing. The average shower consumes 2.5 gallons per minute. Running the water for 6 minutes instead of 12 minutes saves 15 gallons of water.
- Install low-flow shower heads which can reduce water consumption from 2.5 gallons per minute to 1 gallon per minute. You can save 18 gallons of water during a 12-minute shower. Low flow devices are available at Kadena's Eagle Hardware Store.
- Use instant hand sanitizer gels to clean your hands whenever your hands are not visibly soiled.
- Only wash full loads of laundry. The average washing machine uses 25 gallons of water per load.
- If it takes a long time to get hot water from the sink or shower, save the initial cold water in a container and use it to fill the toilet tank or water houseplants.
- Ensure your faucets have aerators installed. The average faucet uses 2.5 gallons per minute. An aerator will reduce the flow to 2 gallons per minute. Ultra-low flow aerators are useful in half-baths or other areas only used to wash hands. They will reduce the flow to 0.5 gallons per minute. Aerators are available at Kadena's Eagle Hardware Store.
- Use dehumidifier water or rainwater to water houseplants or fill the toilet tank.
- Never use your toilet as a wastebasket. Each toilet flush takes an average of four gallons.

Performing some of these basic conservation measures will not only help preserve the water supply, they will demonstrate our commitment to being good neighbors and good stewards of our local environment.

Comments

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### Photos



Members of Team Kadena are reminded to completely shut off water faucets and valves, as small leaks can contribute to water waste and further deplete Okinawa's water reservoirs. (U.S. Air Force photo illustration/Staff Sgt. Christopher Marasky)

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