Easier Being Green

How many gallons does YOUR toilet use per flush?

When you flush, how much water are you using?

There are standards, but each toilet will perform differently. Check the labels printed on the little rectangle of porcelain behind the seat - but be aware that these are not always an accurate representation.

1 gallon per flush = urinal
1.28 gallons per flush = high efficiency
1.6 gallons per flush = low flow (mandated in California post-1992)
3.6 gallons per flush = high flow
anything higher = yikes

Even if you know what your toilet is SUPPOSED to flush, it's hard to tell exactly how much water it's using without measuring.

You will need a measuring tape.

1. Take the top off your toilet.

2. Measure the length of the toilet. Measure so the metal tab at the end of the tape fits against the inside edge of the tank. Record this number.

3. Measure the width of the toilet. Again, make sure you are only measuring the inside of the tank. Record this number.

4. Now send the metal end of the measuring tape down to the bottom of the tank to record the inches of water when the tank is full. Remember this number and leave the tape there.

5. Flush the toilet!! Watch your tape carefully and record the inches of water when the tank is at its lowest.

6. Subtract: (full inches - empty inches). This number is called the "drop." This is the number of inches of water that leave the tank and go into the bowl every time you flush.

7. Now take your drop and multiply it by the length and width. This gets you cubic inches of water for each drop (volume!).

8. Your magical constant is 231. Divide your cubic inches by 231. Add .5.

9. You have converted to gallons per flush. This number should be between 1 and 7.

1.6 gpf = low flow
3.6 gpf = high flow
anything higher = excessive

So again, the equation is ((length) * (width) * (full-empty))/231 +.5