

# Water Conservation for Commercial Buildings

## General Suggestions

- Increase employees' and/or occupants' awareness of water conservation - brochures explaining how to conserve water are available from the Board of Water Supply.
- Conduct contests promoting water conservation (e.g., posters, slogans or conservation ideas) and locate suggestion boxes for conservation ideas in prominent areas.
- Install signs that encourage water conservation in restrooms and common areas.
- Use paper cups for drinking water instead of free flowing drinking fountains.
- As appliances or fixtures wear out, replace them with water-saving models and install flow reducers and faucet aerators on sinks.
- Reduce the load on air-conditioning units by shutting air-conditioning off when and where it is not needed.
- Read water meter daily to monitor the success of water conservation efforts.
- Turn off the continuous flow used to clean the drain trays of the coffee/milk/soda beverage island, and instead instruct food service personnel to thoroughly clean them as needed.
- Turn dishwashers off when dishes are not being processed and wash full loads only.
- Avoid thawing foods under running water by using other available alternatives, including microwaves.
- Wash vegetables in ponded water, do not let water run in the prep sink.
- Minimize use of ice machines and adjust them to dispense less ice.

## Building Maintenance

- Shut off the water supply to equipment and rooms that are unused. Discontinue water circulation pumping in unoccupied areas.
- Shut off spray coil units except where humidity in critical areas cannot be maintained by other means or where the units are used to reduce chiller operation.
- Maintain insulation on hot water pipes.
- Check water supply system for leaks, and turn off any unnecessary flows.
- Repair leaking faucets, showers and toilets.
- Avoid excessive boiler and air conditioner blowdown. Monitor total dissolved solids levels and blowdown only when needed.
- Reduce the water used in toilet flushing by either adjusting the vacuum flush mechanism or installing toilet tank displacement devices (dams, bottles or bags).
- Switch from wet or "steam" carpet cleaning methods to dry powder methods.
- Instruct clean-up crews to use less water for mopping and instead use a broom when possible.
- Change window-cleaning schedule from periodic to an on-call, as required basis.

## Exterior Areas

- Wash autos, buses and trucks less often.
- Discontinue cleaning sidewalks, driveways, loading docks and parking lots with water. Use a broom or rake whenever possible.
- Avoid plant fertilizing and pruning that stimulate excessive growth. Remove unhealthy plants so that other plants can benefit from the water saved.
- In many cases, older, established plants require only infrequent irrigation. Look for indications of water need such as wilt, change of color, or dry soils.
- Limit landscaping additions and alterations. In the future, design for landscapes that require less water. Incorporate xeriscape (water management) techniques into the design.
- Install soil moisture overrides or timers on sprinkler systems. Time waterings, when possible, to occur in the morning when wind and evaporation are lowest. Irrigation equipment should apply water uniformly.
- Investigate the advantages of installing drip irrigation systems.
- Mulch around plants to reduce evaporation and discourage weeds.
- Remove thatch and aerate turf in early spring to encourage the movement of water to the root zone. After March, thatch removal may encourage evaporation from the soil.
- Begin a flexible watering schedule, watering only when needed and not on windy or rainy days.
- Avoid runoff, and make sure sprinklers cover just the lawn or garden, not sidewalks, driveways or gutters.

## Cafeteria and Food Service

- Provide table signs in the cafeteria urging water conservation.

For more information, visit our website at [www.boardofwatersupply.com](http://www.boardofwatersupply.com), or contact the Board of Water Supply at 748-5041 