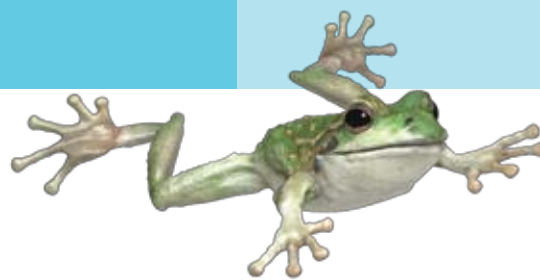


Waterwise Checklist



Office building water conservation

This checklist provides water conservation options, and raises awareness of water issues. Specific information is available in the Waterwise Business series of Information Sheets.

Getting started

To reduce water consumption in an office or commercial/industrial setting, consider the three-step process below:

- 1 Educate and involve employees on water conservation through team briefs, management meetings etc.
- 2 Locate all water using sources (bathrooms, wash sinks, hoses, dish washing machines, HVAC, cooling water, etc.) in your building and estimate how much water is used
- 3 Identify and implement water conservation options by establishing a Water and Environment Team (W.E.T).

It is important that employees understand how their job affects the amount of water used in their work environment. Water saving ideas can be sought from those most involved with the daily operations and activities of the organisation. Make water conservation partly their responsibility by asking them to identify where water is used.

Once the areas of water consumption have been determined, employees can help to implement conservation measures.

Specific information is presented in Waterwise Business Information Sheet – *Water Efficiency Program*.

Immediate conservation options

What employees can do:

- Don't leave water running while washing hands.
- Don't use toilets for rubbish disposal.
- Use dual flush toilets where appropriate.
- Don't pour water down the drain when there may be another use for it, such as watering a plant or for cleaning purposes.
- Report leaks and water losses immediately.
- Remember to conserve water at home.

What building/facility managers can do:

- Designate a water efficiency coordinator.
- Use posters and signs in bathrooms as water conservation reminders (stickers are available from the Water Corporation) with contact information on reporting leaks.
- Detect and repair all leaks.
- Conduct regular dye leak tests in toilet cisterns.
- Check timing cycles and volumes for automatic waterflushing systems in urinals and toilets. Coordinate automatic systems with work hours so they don't run continuously.
- Shut off air conditioner cooling units when not needed.
- Minimise the water used in cooling equipment in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.
- Optimise blowdown/bleed-off control on boilers and cooling towers.
- Install tap aerators and high efficiency shower heads ('AAA' efficiency rating or above).
- Sweep or use garden blowers on paved areas rather than hosing off (unless required for health reasons).
- Reconsider the need to wash building exteriors or other outside structures.
- Observe water restrictions when irrigating lawns and gardens.
- Don't wash cars or other vehicles unless necessary for operator safety. Use car wash facilities that recycle water, or wash on the lawn using water from a bucket.
- Reconsider the operation of decorative pools and fountains.
- Use a shut-off nozzle on all hoses which can be adjusted down to a fine spray so that water flows only as needed. When finished, turn off the hose at the tap instead of at the nozzle to avoid leaks.

What cafeteria workers can do:

- Turn off dishwashers when not in use.
- Wash full loads only.
- Scrape rather than rinse dishes before washing.
- Do not use running water to melt ice or defrost frozen foods.
- Use water-conserving icemakers.
- Install electric eye sensors for conveyor dishwashers.

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Long term actions

Inside

- Consider replacing toilets with dual flush 6/3 litre models.
- As appliances and equipment wear out, replace them with water-saving models.
- Purchase high efficiency equipment such as new water and energy efficient dishwashers.
- Eliminate 'once-through' cooling of equipment by recycling water flow to cooling tower or replacing with air-cooled equipment.
- Ensure water pipes are properly insulated, thus avoiding wasting water while waiting for it to heat up.

Outside

- Detect and repair all leaks in irrigation systems.
- Check irrigation systems and timing devices regularly to be sure they operate properly.
- Water only on allocated watering days either before 9 am or after 6 pm.
- Set sprinklers to water the lawn or garden only – not the street or path.
- Use soaker hoses and trickle irrigation systems.
- Do not leave sprinklers or hoses unattended. A garden hose can discharge 1000 litres or more per hour.
- Test the soil for nutrient content and add organic matter if needed. (Good soil absorbs and retains water better.)
- Use soil wetting agents where appropriate.
- Plant native and/or drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees. Once established, they do not need water as frequently.
- Use mulch around shrubs and garden plants to reduce evaporation from the soil surface and cut down on weed growth.
- Remove thatch and aerate turf to encourage movement of water to the root zone.
- Raise the lawn mower cutting height – longer grass blades cut down on evaporation and inhibit weed growth.
- Minimise or eliminate fertilising which requires additional watering.
- Avoid the installation of ornamental water features (such as fountains) unless the water is recycled.

References

DPPEA FY02-08 – North Carolina Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance.

Further information

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