

## WATER CONSERVATION CHECKLIST :



# FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS

*EVERY DROP COUNTS!*

### GETTING STARTED

To reduce water consumption whether in an office or commercial/industrial setting, consider the three-step process below. Foremost, employees must understand how their job affects water use in their work environment. Solicit ideas from those most involved with the daily operations and activities of the organization. Make conserving water part of their job by having them identify where water is used, whether in bathrooms or manufacturing operations. Once the areas of water consumption have been determined, engage the employees to help implement conservation measures.

- Educate and involve employees on water conservation,
- Locate all water using sources (bathrooms, wash sinks, hoses, dish machines, HVAC, cooling water, etc.) in facility; and
- Identify and implement water conservation options.

### IMMEDIATE CONSERVATION OPTIONS

#### Repair Leaks!

- Ensure water meters are working properly to accurately measure water use and detect leaks.
- Inspect all toilets. A leaking toilet can waste up to 50 gallons of water per day.
- Inspect all faucets, spigots and showerheads. A dripping faucet/showerhead can waste up to 1,000 gallons of water per week.
- Check all water pipes for leaks and repair immediately. A 1/32" hole in a pipe wastes 6,300 gallons each week.

**Kitchen Practices** (About half the water used in restaurants is used in kitchen operations)

- Plan ahead. Do not use running water to thaw frozen foods; place in refrigerator to defrost.
- Serve water only upon request and consider smaller size glasses.
- Turn off continuous flow to wash drain trays of beverage islands; clean thoroughly as needed.
- Reduce the flow to dipper wells for ice cream scoops and other utensils, or rinse scoop and place on dry, clean surface.
- Pre-soak utensils and other wares in sinks rather than under running water.
- Discontinue on-site linen washing; send laundry to commercial facility outside drought area.

#### Dry Clean-up

- Use brooms, squeegees and wet/dry vacs to clean surfaces before washing with water; do not use hoses as brooms.
- Reduce the frequency of kitchen floor hosing by using dry methods; all hoses should have high pressure/low volume shut-off nozzles.
- Sweep and scrape parking lots/sidewalks/window surfaces rather than washing with water.
- Switch from wet/steam carpet cleaning to dry powder cleaning.

**A Raleigh-area restaurant saves 4,000 gallons of water daily by hosing down the kitchen floors only on alternating nights. Floors are mopped every other night.**



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## Ice Machine Use

- Set automatic optic sensors to minimum fill levels to provide lowest possible daily requirement
- Ensure units are air-cooled and not water-cooled.

## Dish Machine Use

- Wash only full loads and turn off when not in use.
- Replace spray heads with more water- efficient ones.
- Ensure water pressures and flows to machine are set at minimum required setting.

## Building Management

- Reduce water pressure to building and associated fixtures (sinks, toilets, showers, laundry and dishwashing machines).
- Turn off any unnecessary flows and equipment when not in use.
- Adjust boiler and cooling tower blowdown rates to maintain total dissolved solids at manufacturer's recommended levels.
- Shut off water-cooled air conditioning units when not needed; replace old units with air-cooled models.

**A major chain restaurant in North Carolina discontinued use of its water softening system and saved approximately 1,500 gallons of water per day.**

## Landscaping

- Water only when needed. Look for signs of wilt before watering, and water only in morning or evening to avoid evaporation.
- Install automatic rain shut-off devices on sprinkler systems.
- Consider using drip irrigation.
- Avoid runoff! Ensure sprinklers are directed to landscape areas and not parking lots and sidewalks.
- Put in drought tolerant plants and grasses.

Refer to Landscaping/Irrigation checklist for more detailed information.

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## LONG TERM OPTIONS

### Purchasing & Menu/Recipe Modifications

- Purchase salads, fruits and vegetables in “ready-to-serve” form to avoid cleaning and preparation wash associated with fresh produce.
- Buy ice from commercial vendors outside drought restriction areas.
- Offer bottled water at cost to customers. Place signs in strategic locations to inform customers of change and reasons why tap water is unavailable.
- Obtain beverages in ready-to-use form (tea, canned sodas, etc.) to reduce amounts of water used for beverage preparation.
- Use single-service eating and drinking utensils

### Fixture Retrofits/Replacements

- Install faucet aerators to increase pressure and reduce volume of water used.
- Install toilet tank water displacement devices (toilet dams, weighted bottles, etc.).
- Retrofit flushometer (tankless) toilets with water-saving diaphragms (saves 20 percent per flush).
- Replace toilets and urinals with low-volume units (saves up to three gallons per flush).
- Consider new machine purchases such as water efficient dish machines, air-cooled ice machines, and air-cooled refrigeration units. Many new dishwashing models for food service equipment use 40 percent less heated water.
- If you have water-cooled air conditioners, consider switching to more efficient air-cooled units.

**Water Reuse** (Ensure water is collected for reuse prior to drain disposal.)

- Reuse rinse water from the dishwasher as flush water in garbage disposal units.
- Reuse water from the steam table to wash floors.
- Reuse final rinse water from multi-compartment (pot) sinks as makeup water for primary basin rinsing/soaking water or to clean floors in nonfood areas.



The North Carolina Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance provides free, non-regulatory technical assistance and education on methods to eliminate, reduce, or recycle wastes before they become pollutants or require disposal. Call DPPEA at (919) 715-6500 or (800) 763-0136 or e-mail [nowaste@p2pays.org](mailto:nowaste@p2pays.org), or visit DPPEA's Web site at <http://www.p2pays.org> for assistance with issues in this checklist or any of your waste reduction concerns.