

A Checklist of Water Conservation Ideas For

Health Care Facilities

This checklist provides water conservation tips successfully implemented by industrial and commercial users. This list has been revised from the original copy first published and distributed by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

General suggestions

Increase employee awareness of water conservation.

Seek employee suggestions on water conservation; locate suggestion boxes in prominent areas.

Conduct contests for employees (e.g., posters, slogans, or conservation ideas).

Determine the quantity and purpose of water being used.

Install signs encouraging water conservation in employee and patient restrooms.

When cleaning with water is necessary, use budgeted amounts.

Read water meter weekly to monitor success of water conservation efforts.

Assign an employee to monitor water use and waste.

Determine other methods of water conservation.

Install signs encouraging water conservation in patient and nonpatient rooms and restrooms.

Use paper cups for drinking water instead of free-flowing drinking fountains.

Building maintenance

Check water supply system for leaks and turn off any unnecessary flows.

Repair dripping faucets and showers and continuously-running or leaking toilets.

Reduce the water used in toilet flushing by either adjusting the vacuum flush mechanism or installing toilet tank displacement devices (dams, bottles, or bags).

Install flow reducers and faucet aerators in all plumbing fixtures, where possible. As fixtures wear out, replace them with water-saving models.

Shut off the water supply to equipment and rooms that are unused. Discontinue water circulation pumping in unoccupied areas.

Ensure return of steam condensate to the feed water tank for re-use.

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.

Keep hot water pipes insulated.

Avoid excessive boiler and air conditioner blow down. (Monitor total dissolved solids levels and blow down only when needed.)

Minimize the water used in cooling equipment, such as air compressors, in accordance with the manufacturer recommendations.

Cafeteria and kitchen areas

Turn off the continuous flow used to clean the drain trays of the coffee/milk/soda/beverage island; clean the trays only as needed.

Turn dishwasher off when not in use. Wash full loads only.

Use water from steam tables to wash down cooking area.

Do not use running water to melt ice or frozen foods. If necessary, use ponded water.

Use water-conserving ice makers.

Provide table signs in cafeteria urging water conservation.

Wash vegetables in ponded water; do not let water run in preparation sink.

Recycle the rinse water from the dishwasher.

Laundry facilities

Reprogram machines to eliminate a rinse or suds cycle, if possible, and if not restricted by health regulations.

Reduce water levels, where possible, to minimize water required per load of washing.

Wash full loads only.

Evaluate wash formula and machine cycles for water use efficiency.

Operations

Turn off water required for film processing or cooling in the X-ray department when not in use.

Recycle water where feasible, consistent with state and county requirements.

Use full loads in sanitizer, sterilizer, dishwasher, and washing machine consistent with infection control requirements.

Overhaul faulty steam traps on sterilizers.

As appliances or fixtures wear out, replace with water-saving models.

Reduce the load on air conditioning units by shutting air conditioning off when and where it is not needed.

Recover condensate from air conditioners, refrigerators, freezers, and ice machines; use it as make-up water.

Exterior areas

Convert from high-water using lawns, trees, and shrubs to xeriscape -- Landscape design incorporating plants providing beautiful color and requiring less water. In the future, design landscapes requiring less water.

Inventory outdoor water use for landscaped areas.

Water landscape only when needed; two to three times a week is usually sufficient.

Wash autos, buses, and trucks less often.

Discontinue using water to clean sidewalks, driveways, loading docks, and parking lots. Consider using brooms or motorized sweepers.

Avoid plant fertilizing and pruning that stimulate excessive growth.

Remove unhealthy plants so remaining 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.

Install soil moisture overrides or timers on sprinkler systems.

Time watering, when possible, to occur in the early morning or evening when evaporation is 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 to encourage the movement of water to the root zone.

Avoid runoff and make sure sprinklers cover just the lawn or garden, not sidewalks, driveways, or gutters.

Do not water on windy days.

Water in winter only during prolonged hot and dry periods. (During spring and fall, most plants need approximately half the amount that they need during the summer.)

For more information, contact: