

## **WATER CONSERVATION IDEAS FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

### **GENERAL SUGGESTIONS**

- Increase employee, faculty, and student awareness of water conservation.
- Conduct contests for employees and students (e.g., posters, slogans, or conservation ideas).
- Seek employee suggestions on water conservation; locate suggestion boxes in heavily traveled areas.
- Install signs in all restrooms and showers encouraging water conservation.
- When cleaning with water is necessary, use budgeted amounts.
- Assign an employee to monitor water use and waste, including weekly meter reading.
- Determine the quantity and purpose of water being used.
- Determine other methods of water conservation.

### **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.
- Install flow reducers and faucet aerators in all plumbing fixtures whenever possible.
- Reduce the water used in toilet flushing:
  - Adjust the vacuum flush mechanism.
  - Install toilet tank displacement devices (dams, bottles, or bags—do not use bricks as they will deteriorate).
- Replace appliances or fixtures that wear out with water-saving models.
- Shut off water supply to equipment and rooms not in use.
- Minimize the water used in cooling equipment, such as air conditioners, in accordance with the manufacturer recommendations.
- Reduce the load on air conditioning units by shutting air conditioning off when and where it is not needed.
- Keep hot water pipes insulated.
- Avoid excessive boiler and air conditioner blow down; monitor total dissolved solids levels and blow down only when needed.
- Instruct clean-up crew to use less water for mopping.
- Change window cleaning schedule from periodic to an on-call/as-required basis.

### **KITCHEN AND LAUNDRY 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.
- Replace spray heads to reduce water flow.
- Recycle rinse water from the dishwasher or recirculate it to the garbage disposal.
- Do not use running water to melt ice or to thaw frozen foods. If necessary, use basins or plugged sinks.
- Use water-conserving ice makers.
- Presoak utensils and dishes in basins or plugged sinks instead of using a running water rinse.

- Wash vegetables in basins or plugged sinks; do not let water run in preparation sink.
- Use water from steam tables in place of fresh water to wash down the cooking area.
- Reprogram machines to eliminate a rinse or suds cycle, if possible, and if not restricted by health regulations.
- Only wash full loads of laundry.
- Evaluate wash formula and machine cycles for water use efficiency.

## **POOL**

- Lower pool water to reduce amount of water splashed out.
- Channel splashed-out pool water into landscaping.
- Use a pool cover to reduce evaporation when pool is not being used.
- Reduce the amount of water used to clean pool filters.

## **EXTERIOR AREAS**

- Inventory outdoor water use for landscaped areas.
- Water landscape only when needed; two to three times a week is usually sufficient.
- Reduce frequency of washing school vehicles and machinery. Wash only for health and safety reasons.
- Discontinue using water to clean sidewalks, driveways, loading docks, and parking lots. Consider using brooms or motorized sweepers.
- Avoid plant fertilizing and pruning that would stimulate excessive growth.
- Remove weeds and 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 wilting, 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.
- Make sure irrigation equipment applies 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.

### **For more information contact:**

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For more information, visit [www.dep.pa.gov](http://www.dep.pa.gov).