

Water Quality and Conservation7

Both the quantity and quality of water is important when we think about water usage. Limiting the use of water is just as important as ensuring that we do not pollute our waterways.

- *Install water-saving equipment.* Plumbing fixtures, such as ultra low-flow toilets and urinals, waterless urinals, low-flow and sensed sinks, low-flow showerheads, and water-efficient dishwashers and washing machines will reduce water usage. In kitchens and other high-water-use areas, spray nozzles can help reduce the amount of time water is left on. Foot pedals at sinks also allow workers to turn water on and off without needing an extra hand. This way water is less likely to be left running.
- *Landscape to reduce water use and contamination.* This begins with reducing the acreage with impervious surfaces, such as asphalt and concrete. Landscape with plants instead of pavement. Where possible, use water permeable gravel or turf for parking areas. For plantings, you can install a water-efficient irrigation system or an irrigation control system. Also consider installing low-flow sprinkler heads. When you water landscaping, do it in the evening when the

GREEN STARS

TRF Management

- Reads and records all utility meters daily and enters the data into a database to develop trend logs of consumption. This alerts staff to any abnormal consumption, such as leaks or faulty equipment.
- Installed flush restrictors on all toilets and urinals to maintain a 1.5-gallon flush rate. Water use decreased by 827,000 gallons, a 22% reduction from previous years.

Westmark Hotels

- Replaced 200 faucets with new ones operating at 2.5 gallons per minute instead of 5 gallons per minute.
- Installed new shower heads operating at 2.5 gallons per minute.
- Installed water savers in all toilets, saving one gallon per flush.

Matanuska Maid

- Recycles once-wasted cooling water back into the milk production process, saving thousands of gallons of water per day.
- Conducts preventive maintenance activities to find and repair water leaks in the plant.
- Replaced hoses with spray nozzles to shut off water when not in use.
- Controlled organic load to the sewer by reducing milk waste, allowing the company to revise its sewer and water permit.
- Reduced water usage by 41% and reduced water and sewer costs by 70%.

Hilton Anchorage

- Implemented a program asking guests to hang up towels or put a card on their pillow if they did not want their towels or sheets laundered. The program has reduced the amount of laundry done per month by about 43,000 pounds or about 20%.

sun will not evaporate the water as rapidly. Finally, consider xeriscaping, which means landscaping with native plants that don't require a lot of additional care and watering. Many of these plants also will need much less fertilizer and pesticides, which can run off and contaminate water sources.

Did You Know . . .

- In downtown Seattle, the recently remodeled building that houses the King County Marketing Commission and the King County Solid Waste Services, takes advantage of Seattle's best known commodity — rain. The building has a system to collect rainwater on the roof, filter it, and pipe it throughout the building to flush the toilets.
- On the North Slope of Alaska, where water is scarce in the unfrozen form for most of the year, Dowell recycles its truck washwater, filtering solids out each time and reusing it to keep its fleet clean.
- *Recycle your water.* As farfetched as it may sound, water can be collected from numerous sources and reused. Sources include rainwater and stormwater runoff, and water from cooling towers, heating units, ventilation equipment, and air conditioners. This water can be used to recirculate in heating and cooling equipment, to flush toilets, or to irrigate landscaping. There are many creative ways to get a second use out of water.
- *Identify and repair leaks.* A schedule of checking for and repairing leaks will ensure that leaks don't go unnoticed for long. Encourage staff to report any leaks or drips and repair them immediately.
- *Make industrial process improvements.* Industrial processes can be large consumers of water. Investigate various pollution prevention and water conservation techniques tailored to your specific industry to reduce water use. Check with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation for pollution prevention guides and information for your industry.
- *Eliminate potential sources of water contamination.* Keep storage containers for used motor oil, fuels, paints, cooking grease, and other wastes away from water drains and out of runoff areas. Train staff to dispose of all of these materials properly and not pour it down drains or storm water grates. Cover piles of soil, sand, or road salt with tarps to avoid rain runoff.
- *Change behavior to reduce water use.* This may be the hardest thing to change in your business. Educate employees about water conservation and suggest ways to reduce water use. For example, sweep by hand before using a high pressure hose to clear an area, both inside and in parking lots; and shovel and plow snow promptly in winter to prevent ice buildup and reduce the need for salt and sand.