

Doing your part

Water conservation tips for Ontario Public Service facilities

Conserving water in Ontario government workplaces is a great way to protect the environment, lower the cost of our operations and show that saving water is possible and economically feasible.

While all staff should be mindful of their water use at home and in the office, facilities managers in the Ontario Public Service have a special responsibility to ensure that the Ontario government meets its commitment to conserve water.

Ways for facility managers to reduce water consumption

Facility managers should consider installing, wherever possible and appropriate, the following equipment:

Public areas

- ultra low-flow aerators on all faucets
- sensor-operated faucets in washrooms
- sensor-operated urinals
- low-flush toilets and flush-valves
- dish-cleaning and waste removal systems that filter out grease and food waste from the washing machines and plate-scraping areas in kitchens (these systems reduce the need for grease traps and associated maintenance)

Client and staff areas

- ultra low-flow aerators on all faucets
- controlled-volume faucets
- sensor-operated urinals
- flush valve mechanisms and flow restrictors in toilet flush valves
- low-flow shower heads

Other water conservation methods

- wash large vehicle fleets only when necessary. Recirculated water should be used whenever possible

The following simple changes in grounds-keeping practices can also lead to significant reductions in water use:

- eliminate sidewalk spray-downs
- replace annual plants with perennial plants and shrubs, which tend to be more resistant to drought
- mulch all flower and garden beds to reduce evaporation
- raise mower blade heights to leave turf longer
- overseed turf areas with drought-resistant grass seed in spring and winter
- water gardens and turf between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. or between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. to reduce surface evaporation (use an automated system if possible)

Purchasing/building maintenance

Consider changing purchasing and building maintenance practices by:

- eliminating the use of toxic or hazardous materials – and the chance of them going down drains – by using biodegradable and phosphate-free cleaning solutions and grease-trap cleaners
- encouraging janitorial cleanup services to use water efficiently
- establishing maintenance and inspection procedures for all water and sewer systems
- arranging utility bill audits

.....
The Ontario government's Water Efficient Ontario Strategy has set a goal of maintaining water consumption levels at 1991 levels until the year 2011.
.....

- re-using building system water (i.e. chillers) and captured rain for irrigation
- converting water cooling to non-CFC chillers

New facilities

Environmentally-responsible specifications can be incorporated into the design of new facilities.

Water conservation elements that can be installed in new facilities include the following:

- low-flow toilets
- sensor-operated urinals
- ultra low-flow aerated faucets and sensor-operated faucets where appropriate
- low-flow shower heads
- xeriscape landscaping, with a minimum of turf area
- automated sub-surface irrigation systems that reduce loss from evaporation
- cisterns to collect water for irrigation
- enhanced water treatment for boiler, chiller and condenser loops
- sub-metering domestic water systems for leak detection

For more information on water conservation, please contact:

Public Information Centre

135 St. Clair Ave. W.

Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5

Tel: (416) 325-4000

Fax: (416) 325-3159

Toll-free number: 1-800-565-4923

Internet: www.ene.gov.on.ca