

waterfacts⁷



Straight Talk About... Water Saving Actions for Businesses

The Capital Regional District Water Department is responsible for the supply, treatment and delivery of bulk drinking water to its municipal (wholesale) customers and for the operation of the retail water distribution system in the Western Communities and Sooke.

The municipal wholesale customers are the City of Victoria, District of Saanich, District of Oak Bay, Township of Esquimalt, Saanich Peninsula Water Commission and the Juan de Fuca Water Distribution Commission.

As well, the Department is responsible for water quality monitoring from source to individual customers throughout Greater Victoria and Sooke and for demand management programs.

Water Savings Make Good Business Sense

For all commercial operations, from a bed and breakfast to a public building, there are many opportunities to take positive actions to reduce water use. Even small daily water savings add up to significant savings in the long term and help reduce the demand on our drinking water resources.

Frequent Use and High Volumes

Two major areas of water use for many commercial operations are found in the food services areas and washrooms. An office setting for example, has toilets and sinks that get a steady use. Public users may add significantly to the volume. For hotels, bed and breakfast operations, recreational facilities, nursing homes, hospitals and other health care settings, these are often the two largest users of both water and energy. These tips will help you be water-efficient in both food service areas and washrooms regardless of the type of organization you have.

Toilets

- Replace your toilets with low-flush 6-litre models. The water savings are significant. Your existing toilet may be using as much as 22 litres per flush.
- If you have tankless, flushometer type toilets, install a simple retrofitting device known as a diaphragm, and reduce the water use by about 20% per flush.
- Check all toilets for leaks. A toilet leak cannot be heard until it is losing about 300 litres of water a day. For tank-style toilets, remove the toilet tank lid; place a few drops of food colouring in the water. Wait, without flushing, for about 15 minutes. If the water in the bowl has not changed colour, there is no leak. If it has changed colour, the leak may be the result of disintegration at the edge of the flapper — or rubber stopper — that closes the tank drain. It's easy and inexpensive to replace. The water saved will be significant.



Washrooms

- Public washrooms and guest/patient bathrooms account for an average of 40% of water used in hotels, motels, bed and breakfast and some health care facilities. Water efficient fixtures, leak detection and repair and other proactive water loss prevention in these areas offer significant savings.
- Low-flow showerheads use about 9.5 litres a minute, compared to upwards of 22 litres per minute in inefficient models. Most low-flow showerheads are designed to offer the same performance as older models. About 40% of the water used for showering is heated. Install these low-flow fixtures and save energy and water costs.
- If the shower-time in your operation adds up to just 16 minutes in a day, a low-flow showerhead can save 30,000 litres of water each year, plus 900 kilowatt-hours required to heat the water. Multiply this by the actual number of shower-time minutes used in your facility and the savings add up in a hurry.
- Replace faucets with low-flow models, or add an aerator to an existing faucet. You can reduce water use by as much as 45% and this will result in some reduction in heated water costs.

General Maintenance and Savings Tips

- A 1/32" hole in a pipe wastes 6,300 gallons (28,665 litres) each month. Check all water pipes for leaks and repair immediately.
- Water used for general cleaning adds up to about 10% of all water used in large public access facilities. Ensure all staff involved in clean-up are aware of the need to be efficient in water uses.
- Change from wet to dry carpet-cleaning methods. Change window-cleaning schedules from "periodic" to "as required".
- If you have water-cooled ice machines, replace them with air-cooled models. Adjust your existing machine to waste as little ice as possible.
- If you have water-cooled air conditioning, consider changing to a more efficient air-cooled model.
- Ensure that your maintenance policy calls for all replacement fixtures, showerheads, faucets and toilets, to be water-efficient models.
- Read all meters monthly to help detect leaks. If you have implemented some water savings efforts, the meter will help you measure the results. Be sure to share the results, both positive and negative, with tenants, guests, visitors and staff by creating signage, or an article in your internal newsletter.

Small Load Laundry Areas

- Some commercial operations such as bed and breakfasts, day care, hairdressing and other organizations do small amounts of laundry on site. If you are about to purchase a new machine look for the front-loading model that is water and energy efficient. The savings in water and energy really add up quickly.
- If you are not planning to buy a new machine, use your existing machine efficiently by running only full loads. Adjust your water level to match the load. Much of the water is heated so you will get energy savings as well as reduced water-use.



Kitchens/ Food and Beverage Services

- Take a **“three-R”** approach to reducing water waste:
- **Reduce** water waste by thawing frozen foods in the refrigerator rather than under a running tap.
- **Reuse** steam table water to wash up in the cook’s area.
- **Recycle** water from final rinse of dishes to use in pre-soak or first rinse if possible.
- **Recycle** excess cold water from table or buffet pitchers — use it to water plants.
- **Reduce** the flow to dipper wells where ice cream or butter scoops and other utensils are rinsed.
- **Reduce** use. If you are planning to replace equipment soon, be sure to ask for water efficient models. Many new models of food service equipment use up to 40% less heated water.
- **Replace** high-flow faucets with low volume nozzles.

More Food Service Area Ideas

- Be sure that dish and glass washers only run fully loaded. Replace the spray heads and reduce the flow through the machine. When the dishes are not being processed, make sure the machine is turned off. Heated water savings will pay off.
- Don’t let taps run continuously when rinsing vegetables or soaking dishes — a foot trigger can help reduce waste.
- Educate food services staff about water efficiency. Often water use in food areas is at the discretion of a busy user. They need some motivation to take positive action.
- Pre-soak utensils in basins of water rather than under running water. To see how much water is wasted this way, use a measured container and a stopwatch to calculate the flow rate of the faucet. Tell staff how much water is wasted through a running faucet. Ask for their co-operation.
- Water waste often occurs around drink dispensers and coffee machines. Turn off the continuous flow used to wash the drain trays. Clean thoroughly when required.
- Use signs or stickers to tell your food services staff and customers or users that you are working to reduce water waste. Explain that this is environmentally beneficial and a wise use of resources.
- Ask patrons if they want a glass of water rather than serving one automatically.

Following Health Regulations

For most facilities, especially health care and recreational facilities, there are a number of health regulations you must follow that are related to water use. Whenever reducing water use in any operation, be sure to check and make sure that the change will meet any applicable human health and safety regulations.

Focus on Environmental Benefits: Getting Others to Co-operate

- Getting co-operation from staff and users of your operation is important. Many people are concerned about the environment. Put a card or sticker in washrooms explaining the environmental benefits of your water saving effort. Consider asking for everyone’s help in reducing water waste as an environmentally friendly act.



The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide information about water saving actions you can take in your business. You will find that many of the suggestions require a small change in habits but putting these actions into practice can save thousands of litres of water daily.

CRD Water also has fact sheets available on the following subjects **Landscape Care During Water Use Restrictions, Watering Restrictions** and **Water saving Around the Home.**

Please call CRD Water Efficiency Information Line at 474-9684 and request copies.

For water efficiency information and materials, contact the

**CRD Water
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- Consider asking visitors and users to avoid wasting water by shutting off taps not in use or by taking shorter showers. Be sure to explain the reasons you are trying to reduce the waste of water and energy resources. Educate staff about the benefits of water savings.
- Encourage everyone to play a role. If you have other environmental programs, such as energy conservation or waste management, incorporate your goals for water savings into these established programs. Use these programs to communicate and educate about water savings.

Outdoors

Follow the Watering Restrictions in effect. If you use water to irrigate a landscaped area, these tips will help you reduce water waste outdoors.

- Use drip or micro irrigation to water trees and shrubs.
- If you have automatically timed in-ground sprinklers, alter the setting to ensure they operate only when needed and follow the watering restrictions in effect. Install an automatic rain shut-off device.
- Mulch your plantings to help keep moisture in the ground.
- Consider the drought tolerant "native" plantings and grass species. Overseed turf areas with drought resistant species.
- Adjust your mower blades higher and avoid giving your grass a brush-cut!
- Longer grass blades shade soil, help to encourage deeper roots and help retain soil moisture.
- Water early in the morning or in the evening. This will ensure that as little water as possible is lost to evaporation.
- Set your sprinkler heads to water only landscape, avoid watering pavement.

Pools and Spa Areas

- Lower water level to avoid splash out. Water that is splashed out can be channelled back into the pool.
- Reduce the amount of water used to backwash filters and reduce the duration of the backwash if possible. Backwashing a typical backyard sized swimming pool uses about 318 litres or 70 gallons of water per minute. Ask your pool specialist about the use of a pre-filter to reduce the number of times back washing is required.
- Remember to take into consideration any public health requirements that might be affected by changes in backwashing or other pool maintenance steps.
- If you are frequently adding water to a pool you may have a leak. Repairing it will save both water and money.

This publication will be available on our web site at www.crd.bc.ca/water