

Fact Sheet: Saving water at work

Many of us spend around eight hours a day, 40 hours a week and 2,000 hours a year at work. That's a lot of our precious time and a lot of water if we leave our waterwise behaviour at home.

Workplaces use water for many purposes, from equipment cleaning, to garden watering, to toilet flushing. Both individual staff and the workplace can benefit from looking at new ways to be waterwise and this includes offices, schools, manufacturers, retail shops and restaurants.

Many workplaces may be able to reduce their water usage and save money in water and energy costs, as well as playing a part in saving our precious water resources for the future.

Where do I start?

Whatever type of business you have or work at, some areas are common to all workplaces, such as kitchens, bathrooms and gardens. The following simple tips can apply to these common areas and help to identify ways to save water at work:

Building maintenance

- Monitor water meter(s) monthly to recognise trends in water use over time. This can identify water consumption trends in your workplace and map the progress of your water conservation efforts.
- Repair any leaking pipes or appliances as soon as they are discovered. Waiting to repair these may cause further damage to the equipment or appliance as well as wasting litres of precious water.
- Switch off equipment that requires water supply when it's not in use.
- If you believe the water pressure is too high at your workplace, you might consider installing a pressure-limiting valve to lower pressure and water usage. Call a licensed plumber if you require assistance to determine the ideal water pressure for your work environment.

Bathrooms and toilets

- Fix leaking toilets, taps and showerheads. A single dripping tap can waste up to 22 litres of water each day, which can add up to over 8,000 litres a year. Consider how much water may be lost over time if your workplace has several leaks at once!
- Install water and energy efficient products such as dual flush toilets and AAA rating taps and showerheads.
- Do not hose down bathroom floors when mopping is just as effective.

In the kitchen

- Fix leaking taps.
- Install water efficient products, such as AAA rating taps.
- Only operate dishwashers when they are full.
- Only wash dishes in the sink once a day or as often as appropriate rather than continuously throughout the day. Rotate this job between staff members and you will only use as much water as needed.
- Use the plug! If washing fruit and vegetables, or de-frosting food, do not use a running tap.
- Do not hose down kitchen floors if mopping is just as effective.

Watering outside

Watering the gardens and grounds of your workplace either early in the morning or in the evenings will help to avoid evaporation. Never water in the heat of the day and please remember to check whether any water restrictions apply in your area before using water on lawns or garden beds.

Installing an automatic watering system with a rain sensor will ensure your gardens are only watered if needed. This is particularly important if systems are not monitored over weekends or holiday periods.

For further information on outdoor water use, please read our fact sheet *Saving Water in the Garden*.

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Educate staff

Educating staff about the importance and benefits of saving water is a low cost and effective way to help to lower water usage in your workplace. Help your employees or colleagues understand why water conservation benefits our environment, and provide incentives to follow simple water-saving tips. Recognising and rewarding waterwise behaviour will also reinforce these measures and help to ensure they continue.

Other ideas to raise staff awareness include:

- Using visual tools such as charts and graphs to highlight water savings to employees.
- Listing water conservation plans and progress on meeting agendas.
- Including water conservation policies and procedures in staff training programs.
- Establishing an ideas box to encourage employees to suggest ways to save water.
- Installing posters or stickers with waterwise information in bathrooms and kitchens is a good way to circulate waterwise messages.

Quick tips for the office worker

- Don't let the tap run continuously when cleaning your coffee cup or lunch dishes. Use a plug to fill the sink with warm, soapy water and let your colleagues use it too.
- Use the same glass all day for your drinking water. Refilling your glass as you need to will save water on cleaning several glasses at the end of the day.
- Only use water to wet and rinse your hands while washing - don't let the water run while you scrub!
- Don't pour water down the drain if you can't finish drinking a glass. Give the rest to a thirsty pot plant. There is often a better way to reuse water rather than tipping it down the drain.

For further information

Contact Western Water on 1300 650 425
or visit www.westernwater.com.au