



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH County of Riverside

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 102-14-DES

DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

Water, a Precious Resource

California's current drought is being billed as the driest period in the state's recorded rainfall history of 163 years. Conservation of water to avoid disastrous shortages is now critical and will likely be even more urgent in the future as the population continues to grow. Fortunately it can take only a little effort along with some changes in habit to achieve water conservation.



On average, a restaurant uses 3,000 gallons of water per day for things such as washing dishes, washing hands, and washing produce. We need to work together to decrease this usage while still ensuring the safety of the customers eating in these restaurants. Inefficient use of water in commercial food facilities can occur in daily operations, in facility maintenance, and in dining room practices.

HOW CAN I CONSERVE WATER?

- Plan ahead and thaw frozen foods in refrigeration units instead of under cold running water.
- Store ice cream scoops that require a dipping well in hot water (135 degrees or above) or in the ice cream itself with the handle out (each flavor must have their own individual scoop) instead.
- Steam or stir-fry vegetables instead of boiling.
- When boiling or cooking, use lids to reduce evaporation.
- Use the water from cooked or steamed foods to start a nutritious soup base.
- Choose the proper pan size for cooking to ensure excess cooking water is not used.
- Conserve ice towards the end of the night/shift by keeping the drink or ice well only partially full.
- Melt ice naturally instead of using water to melt it.
- Use insulated well inserts in place of ice to help keep food cold.
- Wait until a dishwashing rack is completely full before sending it through a mechanical dishwasher.
- Presoak utensils and dishes instead of rinsing them under running water.
- Don't let the water run when washing dishes by hand.
- Regularly check for and quickly repair leaks in the facility at sinks, toilets, dishwashers, steam tables, ice machines, etc.
- Insulate hot water pipes.
- Mop floors instead of spraying.

OFFICES IN: RIVERSIDE, BLYTHE, CORONA, HEMET, INDIO, MURRIETA AND PALM SPRINGS

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Department Web Site – www.rivcoeh.org

- Wash exterior windows with a bucket and squeegee rather than power washing.
- Serve water to customers only upon request.
- Use single-service eating & drinking utensils.
- Recycle paper, plastics, metal and glass. Buy recycled products where available. It takes water to produce these items.
- Post signs reminding customers and employees to use the wastebaskets for trash instead of toilets.
- If you use a water softening system, set it for a minimum number of refills.
- Outside, plant native or water saving plants and trees. Use mulch to hold water around plants.
- Set sprinklers to water early or late in the day to minimize evaporation. Monitor and fix any leaks or broken sprinkler heads immediately.
- Adjust automatic watering systems monthly to match seasonal weather conditions and landscape requirements.

Remember: The health and safety of the customers is the number one priority, and must not be risked at the expense of conserving water.

INSTALLATION OF APPROVED WATER SAVING EQUIPMENT

Cutting down on excessive water use can lower your water bill, reduce wastewater charges, and lower your energy costs. In addition, many local water agencies offer rebates for the installation of many of the water saving pieces of equipment listed below.

- Low-water usage mechanical dishwashers
- Air cooled ice machines
- Foot pedal sinks
- Dry steam tables instead of wet steam tables
- Waterless urinals
- Broilerless combination ovens
- Tankless water heaters
- Water-saving toilets
- Aerators or flow constrictors for faucets
- Replace non-functioning or broken appliances or fixtures with water-saving models.

Note: Any changes in equipment must be approved through the Department of Environmental Health Plan Check Program

CREATE A WATERSAVING PLAN

- Incorporate water saving ideas into your daily operating procedures.
- Assign an employee to check all water/ plumbing fixtures for leaks daily.
- Review all procedures/equipment that use water and think of ways in which water can be conserved.
- Learn to read the water meter to monitor water usage.
- Monitor your water bill for unusually high use to discover “hidden” leaks.
- Create a “water saving tips” suggestion box to get employees involved in ways to use water more efficiently.
- Create a checklist for employees to utilize for opening and closing duties where less water could be used.
- Know where your master water shut-off valve is located. If a pipe were to burst, this could save gallons of water.

*Document available in an alternate format upon request