



WaterWise Hotel Partner FAQ

Will I Have to Make Expensive Facility Changes to Qualify?

Measures do not have to be expensive or complex in order to be effective tools in reducing water usage. Facilities applying to become a WaterWise Hotel Partner can choose from a menu of options that range from implementing policy changes to installing extensive equipment retrofits. In its Green Guidelines, the American Hotel and Lodging Association reports that implementing a linen and towel reuse program for guests staying multiple nights can result in an approximately 17 percent reduction in laundry loads, which translates into lower water and energy costs while also lowering replacement costs by extending their lifespan. For restaurants, the Southern Nevada Water Authority found that setting a policy of offering water only by request can save from 1.5 to 3 gallons of water for every glass of water not served. Both of these programs have minimal costs as they only require table tents and in-room cards to inform guests of their availability and staff education for implementation. Rebates or equipment may be available from Austin Water to assist with larger retrofit projects.

How Much Water Savings Can I Expect?

Older hotels, luxury hotels, and hotels offering full-service restaurants and on-site laundry facilities will typically have the highest per room water usage. A Seattle Public Utilities study identified the following water conservation measures as having the highest savings potential:

- Installing faucet aerators
- Replacing showerheads with low-flow models
- Replacing high flush volume toilets and urinals with low-flow models
- Eliminating once-through cooling
- Recycling laundry water
- Upgrading dishwashers
- Repairing leaks
- Educating staff and guests about water conservation opportunities

The degree of water reduction realized by individual hotels will vary according to the age of the facility, the efficiency of existing fixtures, the level of services provided, and the conservation measures implemented.

How Do I Develop an Effective Water Conservation Program?

The most effective conservation plans are usually those that have been thoroughly developed to include specific goals and detailed plans for meeting those goals, have received management and guest buy-in, and have been effectively communicated to both employees and guests. Getting support from upper management is another important component since it sends a message to employees that water conservation is an important aspect of their duties. Developing an employee conservation team, whose membership is drawn from all operational areas, to find opportunities to increase water conservation throughout the facility can also contribute to success. This team can help with evaluating current water conserving practices, identifying potential areas of

improvement, and developing goals for implementing identified water conserving measures.

What Types of Measures Have Other Hotels Implemented?

The Green Assessment Survey, an independent study conducted by the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) in 2008, found that based on 217 survey responses received from member hotels:

- 88.0% have a linen reuse program in place for guests staying multiple nights
- 83.5% have a towel reuse program in place for guests staying multiple nights
- 82.3% train their maintenance staff on conservation and energy procedures
- 80.4% have water conserving showerheads
- 72.2% track energy and water consumption on a monthly basis
- 69.9% have water conserving toilets
- 65.9% have individuals dedicated to improving their property's environmental performance
- 60.3% have implemented eco-friendly practices into their landscaping efforts
- 42.9% have retrofitted laundry facilities to be water conserving

What Can I Do To Reduce Water Use At My Hotel?

The following is a list of measures that you could implement to potentially reduce your facility's water use. Not every practice on this list will count toward the requirements for becoming a WaterWise Hotel Partner, but they can be useful tools in further reducing water use.

Cooling Towers

- Reduce cooling tower blow down by adjusting cooling tower blow down rate to total dissolved solids at manufacturer's recommended levels.
- Use a conductivity controller to minimize blow-down on cooling towers.
- Consider using ozone as a cooling tower treatment.
- Convert water-cooled air conditioners to air-cooled models.
- Capture and reuse A/C condensate.
- Eliminate single-pass (once-through) cooling water in air compressors and other equipment by using chillers, cooling towers, or air-cooled equipment.

Facility Maintenance

- Change window cleaning schedule to "as required".
- Wash vehicles only when needed. When washing a vehicle, use a shut-off nozzle or bucket. Alternatively, take the vehicle to a water-efficient carwash.
- Establish a sweep first policy. Use a broom to clean parking lots and sidewalks rather than a hose if possible.
- Establish a regular leak detection program to ensure that leaks are identified and repaired in a timely manner.
- Establish a preventative maintenance schedule for all water using equipment to check for leaks and make repairs as soon as possible.
- Make conservation a company policy. Assign an employee to evaluate water conservation opportunities and effectiveness.
- Include water efficiency in the company's environmental policy statement.
- Delegate water efficiency responsibilities.
- Establish quantitative water efficiency goals and communicate those goals to employees.
- Set a policy that faucets not be allowed to run unattended.

- Install a sub-meter and monitor for excessive water consumption or leaks.

Guest Rooms

- Install high efficiency WaterSense labeled toilets that use an average of 1.28 gallons per flush (gpf). Older toilets may be using as much as 3.5 gpf or more.
- Install low-flow showerheads that use no more than 2 gallons per minute (gpm). Older showerheads may be using as much as 3 gpm or more.
- Install low-flow bathroom sink aerators that use no more than 0.5 gpm. Older aerators may be using as much as 2.5 gpm.

Guest/Staff Education

- Remind guests and staff to use water only when needed. Brochures, door hangers, table tents, mirror clings, coasters, coloring sheets, and pillow cards are some methods that can be used to convey this information.
- Offer conservation education on in-room TV information channel.
- Offer a self-audit checklist for hotel management.
- Instruct cleaning crews in efficient use of water. Water used for general cleaning averages 6 percent of all of the water used in a hotel or motel.

Irrigation/Landscape

- Develop a regular irrigation system maintenance schedule and promptly make any needed repairs.
- Employ the proper irrigation applicator for each irrigation zone, such as drip irrigation for planter beds.
- Use reclaimed water for irrigation if available.
- Maximize the use of drought tolerant native and/or adapted landscape plants.
- Install a pressure regulating valve (PRV) if water pressure is greater than manufacturer's specifications.
- Use at least two inches of mulch in planter beds to reduce evaporation and weed growth.
- Increase soil quality and moisture retention by periodically topdressing landscaped areas with compost.
- Have an operational rain sensor or soil moisture sensor installed on irrigation system.
- Adjust irrigation controller settings for season, sun exposure, plant material, and soil type.
- Adjust sprinkler heads to prevent runoff and inefficient water application.
- Water early in the morning to minimize evaporation and maximize root zone saturation.

Laundry Facilities

- Replace washing machines with water efficient models.
- Launder towels and bed linens only by request and provide guests with laundry request door hangers.
- Wash only full loads of laundry.

Restaurants

- Convert water-cooled icemakers to air-cooled models. Water-cooled ice machines use nearly 150 gallons of condenser water to produce 100 pounds of ice, plus 20 gallons of water to make the ice. Air-cooled machines use only the 20 gallons necessary to make 100 pounds of ice.

- Install pre-rinse spray valves that use no more than 1.28 gpm
- Use dry cleanup equipment.
- Utilize automatic or foot-controlled faucets to eliminate unnecessary water flow at bar sinks and food preparation areas.
- Install 0.5 gpf or waterless urinals in restrooms.
- Replace automatic shut-off spray nozzles, which can use as much as 4.5 gallons of water each minute, with low-volume nozzles using 2.0 gallons per minute.
- Provide table tents explaining that water is served only by request. For every glass of water not served, as much as 1.5 to more than 3 gallons of water is saved.
- Install connectionless (pressureless) food steamers. Based on a study conducted by the Food Service Technology Center, these steamers save an average of 81,500 gallons per year with an estimated 10-year life.
- Pre-soak utensils in basins of water rather than in running water.
- Don't use running water to melt ice or thaw food. Thaw food in the refrigerator instead.
- Turn off the continuous flow used to wash the drain trays of beverage islands.
- Turn dishwashers off when not processing dishes.
- Wash only full loads of dishes.
- Reduce the flow of water to continuous flow water troughs for ice cream scoops and other utensils.

Swimming Pools/Spas

- Check for swimming pool leaks. This could save up to 100,000 gallons per year.
- Reduce backwashing of pool filter by keeping leaves and other debris out of pool. Backwash water may be able to be reused on landscape plants if the pool utilizes non-chemical water treatment.
- Turn down thermostats on heated pools and spas to reduce the rate of evaporation.
- Lower pool level to avoid splash-out. Water that is unavoidably splashed-out can be channeled onto the landscape or back into the pool.
- Install a pool cover and use it when pool is not in use. This can reduce evaporation by 30 to 50 percent.
- Create a windbreak to minimize wind's impact upon the water surface and decrease evaporation.