



Benefits of Water Efficiency Go Beyond Your Bottom Line!

Commercial Water Use in the United States

In 1995, about 9,590 million gallons of fresh water were used every day—more than the average daily flow of the Potomac River at Washington, D.C.—in commercial applications in the United States. That is a sixteen percent increase over 1990 levels. This means hotels, motels, restaurants, office buildings, and other commercial facilities are responsible for approximately three percent of the 341 billion gallons of freshwater used daily in the United States. Nationally, commercial users consume 17 percent of publicly supplied water.

EPA formed the Water Alliances for Voluntary Efficiency (WAVE) program as part of an effort to ensure that adequate U.S. water resources remain available to support both human and environmental needs. Through WAVE and other programs, EPA works with its partners to preserve the nation's water resources, conserve energy, prevent pollution, and help members save money.

How Does Water Efficiency Benefit the Environment?

Water efficiency provides considerable savings on water and energy costs, but its environmental impact can be just as dramatic. Water efficiency helps to protect the environment by conserving water resources and natural habitats, and reducing wastewater generated and energy consumed.

Conserves Water Resources and Natural Habitats

- ◆ Saves precious high-quality drinking water resources.
- ◆ Leaves more water in lakes, rivers, and streams for fishing, swimming, and boating.
- ◆ Protects groundwater from salt water intrusion.
- ◆ Preserves vital natural habitats and breeding grounds for birds, fish, and other animals.
- ◆ Helps protect wetlands.

Reduces Wastewater and Other Pollutants

- ◆ More efficient water use reduces the amount of wastewater needing treatment.
- ◆ Treatment facilities are able to treat smaller volumes of wastewater more effectively, reducing pollutant discharges into lakes, rivers, and streams.



- ◆ More efficient landscape irrigation practices can reduce the volume of surface water runoff, and reduce the amount of pollutants, such as excess fertilizers and pesticides, that wash into nearby lakes, rivers, and streams.

Conserves Energy

- ◆ Being water efficient means less energy is needed to heat, pump, and treat water and wastewater.
- ◆ Energy conservation resulting from improved water efficiency helps reduce air emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels and other production wastes, such as coal ash, boiler slag, emission control dust, and even nuclear waste.
- ◆ Conserving energy also contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants that cause acid rain (carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide respectively).

How Can I Learn More?

For more information on how WAVE can help you identify water conservation measures to meet your needs, call 202 260-7288. You also can write to the WAVE Program at U.S. EPA (4204), Ariel Rios Building, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460; or visit our site on the Internet at <www.epa.gov/owm/genwave.htm>.

