

Waterwise cleaning practices

Waterwise Business Information Sheet

Water management options

Water use for general cleaning can account for 10% of all water used in hospital buildings, and up to 50% in the food processing industry.

Cleaning of premises can occur outside of usual business hours, and wasteful water practices may go unnoticed. Although water saving devices may be fitted, the best form of water use management is through education on efficient water practices.

Cleaners should be supervised and educated on cleaning practices, and specific cleaning procedures should be defined.

Even modest regular savings in water use can translate to large savings in water charges.

Cleaning tips

Large areas of floor:

- Do not use hoses as brooms. Use brooms, squeegees and wet/dry vacuum cleaners to clean surfaces before washing with water.
- Ensure all washing equipment has aerated spray nozzles equipped with shutoff valves.
- Ensure hoses are fitted with high pressure, low-volume nozzles and shutoff valves.
- Where possible mop floors rather than hosing or washing.
- Switch from 'wet' carpet cleaning methods, such as steam cleaning, to 'dry' cleaning (powder methods).

Outdoors:

- Sweep parking areas rather than washing, unless required for health reasons.
- Sweep or use garden blowers on paved areas.
- Reconsider the need to wash building exteriors or other outside structures.
- Where possible, reduce the frequency of external equipment and floor cleaning.



- Change window cleaning schedule from 'regular' to 'as required', and use squeegees rather than hosing.
- Wash vehicles only when needed, unless necessary for operator safety.
- Limit use of high pressure sprayers unless absolutely necessary.

Unnoticed cleaning practices

Example 1:

A hotel manager happened to enter a room being cleaned and noticed that the shower was left running on hot. When asked to explain, the cleaner commented that the purpose was to steam up the mirrors in order to run the squeegee over them. This practice is very wasteful of water and energy. An alternative would be to use a trigger spray to wet the mirror.

Example 2:

A manager of a meat processing plant noticed a worker 'chasing' a piece of scrap across the floor with a jet of water from a hose, eventually sending the scrap down the drain. Not only is this wasting water, but scraps down the drain can cause blockages and increase the suspended solids load of the waste - resulting in higher industrial waste charges.