

Water Conservation for Restaurants

In response to the current drought situation, the North Carolina Division of Environmental Health offers the following water conservation suggestions for food service establishments. The suggestions, if implemented, can reduce water usage while maintaining safe food and protecting the public health.

1. Check your water supply system, including all fixtures, for leaks, even if you do not think they are leaking.
2. Educate your staff about methods of water conservation and ask them for suggestions to help in the conservation efforts.
3. Use brooms rather than water for sweeping outside parking lots; however, the use of water for cleaning to prevent the breeding or presence of public health pests should continue as necessary.
4. Seek advice from the city water plant regarding low water-using fixtures.
5. When possible, install low-flow aerators on all faucets.
6. Use single-service eating and drinking utensils.
7. Buy ice from commercial ice plants.
8. Purchase drinking water from bottled water plants.
9. Obtain beverages in ready-to-use forms (boxed tea, canned soft drinks, etc.).
10. Stop preparing fresh fruits and vegetables. Buy pre-washed, canned, or frozen products.
11. Send laundry to a commercial facility.
12. Shut off dipper wells, while storing utensils in product or on a clean surface.
13. Use dry surface cleaning methods, followed by damp mopping or wipes. Do not continue to do flood-type cleaning of floors; use a mop and a bucket.
14. Double-bag garbage, so bags do not break in cans or dumpster.
15. Serve water upon request only.
16. Use refrigeration rather than running water to thaw foods.
17. Before washing dishes, dry-scrape and pre-soak in standing water not under a steady flow of water.
18. Consider using food-grade pan liners, the pan can be used several times between washings on the same day.
19. Switch to ready-to-cook products for items such as biscuits to reduce the number of dirty utensils.
20. Install "pedal-activated" hand sinks, which do not need to run during the entire handwashing process.
21. Switch to vinyl or paper tablecloths and napkins to reduce linen use.