



Water Conservation Plans and Annual Reports

Water conservation focuses on efficiency of use and the reduction of demands on existing water supplies. According to the 2017 State Water Plan, water conservation represents 28 percent of future supplies, with 10 percent from the municipal sector, 16 percent from the agricultural irrigation sector, and 2 percent from mining, manufacturing, and power generation. There are some savings from water conservation practices achieved passively in the normal course of daily activities. Other savings are achieved through education, awareness, and programs designed specifically to reduce water use.

The purpose of a water conservation plan is to ensure that water is used efficiently within a utility. A water conservation plan must establish specific, quantified five- and ten-year targets and goals for water use in gallons per capita per day, including for total water use and residential water use, as well as for water loss in gallons per capita per day. The water conservation plan should include a schedule for achieving those targets and goals, a method of tracking progress, and a water rate structure that is cost based and does not encourage the excessive use of water. A water conservation plan should also contain long-term elements such as ongoing public education activities; universal metering; water accounting and water savings from reuse/recycling activities; leak detection and repair; and other conservation activities.

Entities must submit a water conservation plan 1) when applying for more than \$500,000 in financial assistance from the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB); 2) if they provide potable water service to 3,300 or more connections; or 3) have certain Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) surface water rights. Entities must also submit an annual report to the TWDB on the progress of program implementation for their water conservation plan.

Data

In 2013, the 83rd Texas Legislature appropriated funds to the TWDB to streamline online data collection for the agency's water planning and conservation programs. The Loss, Use, and Conservation online reporting application eliminates redundant data entry for the Water Use Survey, the Water Loss Audit, the Conservation Annual Report, and the Utility Profile. The application also provides the opportunity for entities to upload their water conservation plans digitally. Use of this reporting application improves the data collection process and the quality and consistency of that data.

The Loss, Use, and Conservation application removes the frustration associated with duplication of effort in fulfilling annual reporting requirements and provides a resource for reporting entities and water planning, outreach, and assistance considerations.

Additional Requirements

Water conservation plans must be updated once every five years, including the five- and ten-year targets and goals. Entities that must submit a water conservation plan to the TWDB and TCEQ are also required to provide a copy of their plan to the appropriate regional water planning group, which in turn is required to consider those plans in developing water management strategies for the planning area.

Resources, Required Forms, and Worksheets

The TWDB's Municipal Conservation web page, www.twdb.texas.gov/conservation/municipal/plans/index.asp, provides links to online resources that are available to assist in developing and implementing a water conservation plan. Included are the "Water Conservation Best Management Practices Guide," the "Guidance and Methodology for Reporting on Water Conservation and Water Use," and the "Municipal Conservation Planning Tool."

Each entity's water conservation plan should include a utility profile form that provides an overview of the previous five years of water use data that assists in identifying opportunities for water conservation.

To obtain more information on water conservation plans, utility profiles, and annual reports, visit the TWDB's water conservation website at www.twdb.texas.gov/conservation/municipal/index.asp or contact conservation staff at (512) 475-1639 or wcpteam@twdb.texas.gov.