

9.1 Prohibition on Wasting Water

Applicability

This BMP is intended for all Municipal Water User Groups (“utility”). This BMP should be considered by utilities that have customers who continue to waste water despite the efforts of the utility to educate customers to reduce waste of water. Many customers who are cooperating with conservation efforts may lose their inclination to conserve water if other water customers are ignoring efficient water management practices and continuing to irrigate the streets and parking lots or allow outside leaks to run visibly for long periods. In these circumstances, the utility’s efforts in limiting water waste should find acceptance by the general public. The specific measures listed as part of this BMP can be implemented individually or as a group. Upon review, a utility may find that it is already implementing one or more these elements and it may want to adopt additional elements outlined below.

Once a utility decides to adopt this BMP, the utility should follow the BMP closely in order to achieve the maximum water efficiency benefit from this BMP.

Description

Water waste prohibition measures are enforceable actions and measures that prohibit specific wasteful activities. Under this BMP, the utility enacts and enforces ordinances to prohibit wasteful activities including: water waste during irrigation, failure to fix outside faucet leaks, service line leaks (on the customer side of the meter), sprinkler system leaks; once-through use of water in commercial equipment, non-recirculation systems in all new conveyer and in-bay automatic car washes and commercial laundry systems; non-recycling decorative water fountains; and installation of water softeners that do not meet certain regeneration efficiency and waste discharge standards.

Water waste during irrigation includes: water running along the curb of the street, irrigation heads or sprinklers spraying directly on paved surfaces such as driveways, parking lots and sidewalks in public right of ways; operation of automatic irrigation systems without a functioning rain shut off device or soil moisture sensor; a wind sensor and/or freeze sensors in some areas of the State; operation of an irrigation system with misting heads caused by water pressure higher than recommended design pressure for the heads, or broken heads; and spray irrigation during summer months between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Summer months are generally considered June 1 through September 30, but utilities may select a longer or shorter timeframe. Utilities may want to consider not allowing spray irrigation until as late as 8 pm in summer months. An exemption for these watering hours should be included for newly installed landscapes for a limited period of time.

Implementation

The utility should consider stakeholder group information meetings, especially for those affected by the landscape component of this BMP. Working with stakeholder groups is important to achieving “buy in” from the landscape industry and water customers.

Utilities with ordinance making powers may want to consider amending landscaping or irrigation ordinances that may have provisions that could be changed to increase water efficiency. For example, Corpus Christi has irrigation system regulations¹ requiring drip irrigation in landscaped areas between the sidewalk and the street. Plan customer follow-up compliance and education after ordinance passage. Implement ordinance and tracking plan for violations, compliance notifications, and enforcement.

Utilities that lack ordinance making powers may want to develop a plan for educating customers, especially those directly affected, about the requirements of a water waste prohibition program; plan a program including stakeholder meetings as needed; plan a follow-up compliance and education program; and implement a water waste program and tracking plan for violations and compliance notifications.

Schedule

Utilities pursuing this BMP should begin implementing this BMP according to one of the following approaches:

- 1) For utilities with ordinance making powers
 - a. In the first twelve (12) months: Plan, develop, and pass an ordinance, including stakeholder meetings as needed. Develop a plan for educating customers, especially those directly affected by the requirements that are enforced as a result of the ordinance.
 - b. After Ordinance Passage (In the 2nd year and on): Continue implementation and an outreach program for customers. Continue compliance education and initiate enforcement programs. Enforcement can include citations with fines and service interruption for repeat offenders. Or,
- 2) For utilities that lack ordinance-making powers

In the first twelve (12) months: Plan a program including stakeholder meetings as needed. Implement a water waste program and tracking plan for violations and compliance notifications.

Scope

To accomplish this BMP, the utility should adopt water waste prohibitions policies, programs or ordinances consistent with the provisions for this BMP specified in Section C.

Documentation

To track the progress of this BMP, the utility should gather and have available the following documentation:

- 1) Copy of water waste prohibition ordinances enacted in the service area;
- 2) Copy of compliance or enforcement procedures implemented by utility; and
- 3) Records of enforcement actions including public complaints of violations and utility responses.

Determination of Water Savings

Total water savings for this BMP can be estimated from each water wasting measure eliminated through the actions taken under this BMP. For the replacement of inefficient equipment, the water savings are the difference in use between the new or upgraded equipment and inefficient equipment (See Industrial Cooling Processes BMP for additional information). For landscape water waste, the savings can be calculated based on estimated savings from each water waste warning or enforcement. There will be additional savings from the education of customers who may change some of their inefficient water use practices. These savings could be determined by surveys.

Cost Effectiveness Considerations

The primary costs associated with implementing this BMP will be ongoing administrative and staff costs. There may be some one time only costs associated with developing and adopting ordinances and enforcement structures. If a utility chooses to implement fines as part of its program, the revenues from those can be included in the cost effectiveness analysis.

References for Additional Information

- 1) *Corpus Christi Irrigation System Regulations* <http://www.cctexas.com/>
- 2) *A Water Conservation Guide for Public Utilities*, New Mexico Office of the State Engineer, March 2001.
- 3) *City of Wichita Falls Drought Emergency Ordinance*, <http://www.cwftx.net/drought/ordinance.PDF>
- 4) *El Paso Water Conservation Ordinance*, <http://www.epwu.org/ordinance.html>
- 5) *Handbook of Water Use and Conservation*, Amy Vickers, Waterplow Press, May 2001.