

How Restaurants Can Lower Their Water and Energy Bills

- Make sure that water-cooled refrigeration and ice-making equipment is well maintained. If at all possible, replace water-cooled equipment with air-cooled equipment. Refrigeration and ice-making equipment, which uses “once-through” city water for cooling, is usually the largest water consumer in any food-related business. When this equipment works properly, it does its job but uses hundreds of gallons of water a day. Often, the valve that controls the flow of water (and shuts it off when the compressor is not working) fails, causing water to flow 24 hours a day. Having the equipment checked and maintained can prevent very high water bills. DEP has a separate brochure, “Once-Through Water-Cooled Refrigeration” that provides more detailed information. If the restaurant has its own water meter, check to see if there’s movement at closing time after clean-up. If the leak detection dial is moving, you have some kind of continuous leak.
- Install flow-restricting aerators on all faucets so they flow at no more than two gallons per minute. For faucets, which are used for filling pots, a fingertip control valve can be used to switch between aerated and full flow. Instruct kitchen staff to use full flow only when truly required.
- Install hands-free or foot-activated pedals for faucets or automatic shutoff valves.
- Use low-flow pre-rinse valves for automatic dishwashers.
- Serve water to customers only when they request it. This is required by regulation, even outside of a drought emergency.
- Try to eliminate or minimize the use of flowing water to defrost food. If flowing water is legally required to defrost food, use the minimum flow possible.
- Equip hoses used to wash down the kitchen with a self-closing nozzle that flows at no more than five gallons per minute.
- Run dishwashers and other equipment only with full loads whenever possible.
- Request a free restaurant water audit from DEP. This audit will be conducted by DEP’s contractor for the program, Honeywell Utility Services. Again the audit is free and will help to identify areas where you can conserve water and energy and reduce operating expenses. Additionally, if warranted, The Honeywell technician performing the audit can install (at no cost) a low flow pre-rinse spray valve on your automatic dishwasher. For further information contact Rick Gunthorpe at (718) 595-4781 or email to rgunthorpe@dep.nyc.gov
- Replace incandescent exit signs with LED or compact fluorescent types. Replace incandescent fixtures with compact fluorescents.
- When purchasing a new clothes washer, buy an EnergyStar-rated product. When buying a new dishwasher, look for models with reduced water use.
- Replace older toilets with 1.6-gallon toilets. Pressure-assisted models are best for commercial occupancies.
- Vacuum air conditioning and refrigeration coils at least twice a year.

For more information visit www.nyc.gov/dep and www.getenergysmart.org. Dial 311 for all non-emergency City services.

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