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## Making Your Restrooms Green and Sustainable

**By Robert Kravitz** — posted 11/08/2011



Surprisingly, one area often overlooked as a facility becomes greener and more sustainable is the restroom. Yet more water is used in restrooms than virtually any other area of a facility, and because water and energy are interconnected, water consumption increases the amount of energy necessary to power a facility.

In addressing this issue, Waterless Co., Inc. President Klaus Reichardt offers the following suggestions to help make commercial restrooms

greener and more sustainable:

- **Lighting.** Restroom lighting is often on 24 hours a day. Install motion sensors to turn off lights when the restroom is not used.
- **Light bulbs.** Replace conventional light bulbs with energy-efficient lighting.
- **Cleaning.** Virtually all products used for cleaning restrooms now have certified green equivalents; consider using only green cleaning chemicals and products.
- **Water faucets.** Install sensors. Studies indicate sensors that turn water on only when needed can reduce water consumption by as much as 70 percent.
- **Hand dryers.** A public restroom used by 200 people a day may use enough paper towels to fill a six-foot-tall garbage bag. Provide hand towels or electric hand dryers to eliminate this waste.
- **Fixtures.** Install fixtures that surpass current government mandates. Some new toilets use 1.28 gallons of water per flush, and no-water urinals save thousands of gallons of water per year per urinal.\*
- **Recyclables.** Station recycling bins in restrooms. Many paper products used in restrooms can be recycled.
- **Leaks.** Search for leaks and fix them. Just one faucet dripping intermittently can waste three gallons of water per day—or up to 1,095 gallons a year.

“Restrooms are highly visible areas,” adds Reichardt. “A green and sustainable restroom shows a facility is doing more than talking green, it’s making green and sustainable part of the way it does business.”

\*Current U.S. government regulations require that toilets use no more than 1.6 gallons of water per flush and urinals about one gallon per flush.



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