

Tentatively Approved 2/10/09

## Drinking Fountains

### **Goal:**

To provide attractive tap water for drinking via accessible and convenient dispensers

### **Background:**

Tap water must meet state and federal standards for safe drinking water. Using a water fountain to refill containers saves money for consumers and reduces the use and disposal of single-use plastic bottles, especially when installed in easily accessible, highly visible areas such as main hallways, waiting areas and cafeterias. Water fountains with bottle-refill spigots and bottle-less water coolers dispense water from the tap and eliminate the expense of purchasing single-use or bulk bottled water.

Typically, reusable drinking water containers have lower life-cycle costs and lower environmental impacts than single-use plastic bottles. Water coolers that utilize bottled water create waste and environmental impacts from the manufacture and disposal of the bottles and the transportation of the bottled water. Single use bottles of water carry similar environmental impacts and additionally create a potential for litter.

### **Definitions:**

**Indoor fountains** are drinking fountains used by the public and workforce that are plumbed directly into the building water service. They can be either wall mounted or free standing.

**Outdoor fountains** are drinking fountains used by the public and workforce in an outdoor setting and are plumbed directly into a water supply.

**Filtration** is the process of removing undesirable chemical or biological contaminants including chemical substances that contribute to undesirable taste and odor.

### **Specifications:**

In addition to meeting all federal and state laws, codes, rules and regulations for availability, accessibility and safe drinking water, drinking water fountains shall, where appropriate and cost competitive, provide the following:

For all drinking water fountains:

- Ability to fill water bottles with either a faucet or other feature that provides at least 10 inches of clearance to allow filling and refilling of cups, sports bottles, pitchers, carafes, etc.

- A self-closing supply valve or other mechanism that prevents water from running if left unattended.

For outdoor drinking water fountains:

- Vandal resistant spigot or other vandal resistant features,
- Frost proof assembly where exposed to the elements or allow for seasonal shutdown and drainage.

For indoor drinking water fountains:

- If refrigeration is provided at the fountain, the most energy efficient methods of chilling available and/or Energy Star rated methods should be chosen to the extent available.
- Filtration can add to the desirability of use but requires maintenance.
  - Filters must be changed as recommended by the manufacturer in order to be effective. If not maintained adequately, chemical removal can be ineffective and bacteria that grow on the filters can slough off into the water.
  - Filters should be installed in or near the individual fountains and the point-of-use because most filters that remove taste and odor chemicals also remove the residual water treatment chemicals that prevent biofilms (bacteria and other organisms) from growing in the plumbing lines.
  - Use of recyclable filters is encouraged.

**Affected entities are encouraged to:**

- Provide signage that explains the features that add to the desirability of use.
- Retrofit existing fountains by adding a nozzle and/or spigot for filling and refilling water bottles and/or other similar containers.
- Provide routine inspection, cleaning, and servicing