

Wasted Water: A Drain on Your Event?

When it comes to greening up your next trade show or conference, does reduced water usage spring to mind? Sure, some environmentally friendly practices are more visible to the guests and would seem to make a bigger impact than others — like serving Fair Trade coffee and using locally grown organic vegetables.

But did you know that each person uses about 80-100 gallons of water *per day*, according to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)? And that's just from flushing the toilet and running the shower or bath. Clearly, reducing water consumption is a little way to make a big impact.

Water conservation in action

When Atlanta experienced a drought in 2007, the governor of Georgia called for businesses to cut back on water consumption by 10 percent. And an *aquarium* venue — the Georgia Aquarium, to be exact — was able to cut back on its water consumption by 23.63 percent through practices such as capturing condensation from cooling units, installing waterless urinals in the bathrooms and banning water use for landscaping.

If one of the largest aquariums in the world can reduce their water usage, so can you! But how can you make sure you choose a venue that uses water-saving best practices?

- Look for venues that have a **water-conservation policy** already in place; policies should include such practices as installing water-saving devices on all showerheads, faucets and toilets. Ask for specific details of the venue's [sustainability program](#) rather than just asking "Do you have a water conservation program?"
- Ask if a **linen and towel reuse program** is in place. That means guests can fill out a card to inform the housekeeping staff that they will reuse their linens and towels rather than having fresh ones brought each day. Less laundry to wash equals much less water usage!
- Serve **water at meals only by request**, rather than pre-filling hundreds of glasses. Meeting Strategies Worldwide estimates that if you avoid pre-filling water glasses at banquet lunches for 2,200 people for three days, you can save 520 gallons of water!
- **Get it in writing:** Include a clause in your contract with the venue that states that they will comply with your environmentally friendly requests.

Most of these water-saving practices won't even be noticed by event attendees, and participation in the linen-reuse program is completely optional. Most likely, the vast majority of guests will appreciate your water conservation efforts — and the less water you use, the less money and natural resources go down the drain!

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