

# ENSPiRE SESSION 6

## Smart Water and Wastewater Management

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BOMA Enspire's Nov 12 education session on water conservation and wastewater management showed building managers how to cut water use, avoid costly leaks and manage wastewater more effectively using real examples from mid-tier buildings like yours.

Effective water management starts with knowing how much water your building uses and when. Check meters and monitoring systems regularly, since unexpected spikes or anomalies in utility bills can point to undetected leaks or equipment issues. **In one case described in the session, repairing a leak in an underground pipe reduced water consumption by 69%.**

The speakers urged managers to look at how water is treated and pumped through a building, since water quality affects both performance and energy use. In buildings with hard water, scale buildup can reduce flow, strain equipment and increase the energy required to heat and move the water. Building-level water treatment can prevent scale and improve efficiency, while variable-speed drives help pumps match real demand instead of running at a fixed output.

Cooling towers and irrigation systems use a significant amount of water, so it's important to meter them and track consumption. For irrigation, choose drought-tolerant landscaping and use controls that prevent watering during rain, high winds or drought.

A strong water management program relies on regular measurement and upkeep: audit current use, inspect pipes and fixtures, monitor consumption using sub-meters, use low-flow fixtures and efficient irrigation, and track progress against your targets.

### Here are the key steps to improve water use in your building:

- Install sub-meters for tenants with high water demand, such as restaurants
- Read water meters weekly to monitor use and waste
- Inspect faucets and toilets regularly for leaks
- Install low-flow faucet aerators
- Replace toilets with low-flow models
- Use brooms instead of hoses to clean sidewalks and entrances
- Choose drought-tolerant plants to reduce irrigation



Stephen Dixon added several cautionary examples from his field work. In one case, an energy audit didn't match the building's actual fuel use. The reason turned out to be a leaky valve that let hot water escape outside, driving fuel costs up by 30 per cent. **His point: when your numbers don't make sense, assume there's a hidden problem and keep digging.** A complete sustainability approach looks at both the water a building uses and the water it sends down the drain.

On the wastewater side, the speakers explained that wastewater from indoor fixtures, rooftop stormwater and parking lot runoff contains a lot of suspended solids, which can damage pipes over time. Restaurants should have interceptors that strain out solids at the drain point.

Effective wastewater management means keeping pipes in good condition, educating tenants on proper use and tracking how well these practices are working.

### The best wastewater management steps to take are:

- Inspect pipes annually with a camera and clean them
- Check tenants' sinks to ensure they're using strainers
- Develop guidelines and educate tenants on how to use your plumbing systems
- Install hand dryers in washrooms, since paper towels often get into the drain pipes and cause blockages
- Implement a grease-capture program for restaurants



If you're ready to tighten up your building's water and wastewater practices, you can dive deeper by watching the full session replay on the BOMA Enspire website.

Access Resources and the session tool kit [here](#):

Access the Session recording [here](#):

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