

**Fact Sheet**  
**NEWWA Conservation Committee**  
**Water Conservation Best Management Practices**  
**Water Conservation Coordinator Position**  
**October 4, 2007**

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Water conservation coordinators are professional positions commonly found in the West and other places frequently plagued with drought conditions. Here in New England, however, one would be hard pressed to find a water conservation coordinator – even in a large utility. For some communities this may represent a cost-effective solution to sound water resource management.

Some public water suppliers may not see the need to employ a water conservation coordinator. Water is plentiful most times of the year; if demand gets too high in the summer mandatory restrictions on outdoor water use is usually an effective way to deal with the problem. However, reacting to emergency situations is not in the long term best interests of the utility and could lead to poor relations with customers. Responsible water suppliers manage water demand to ensure the long-term sustainability of its water resources to meet the needs of human and natural communities. One way to achieve this goal is to create and implement a comprehensive water conservation program that addresses residential, institutional and commercial users. Such a program helps maintain system reliability in terms of water quantity (making sure demand does not exceed supply) and quality.

Public water suppliers seriously interested in implementing a comprehensive water conservation effort should consider having a dedicated position, or part of a position, on-board, either an additional staff member or a consultant, to create and carry out various programs. Some water conservation activities could be added to existing staffs' duties, but a program is more likely to succeed when an individual is tasked specifically to implement conservation programs. Some utilities in the Northeast are hiring Environmental Specialists whose duties encompass environmental compliance as well as conservation. However this position is assigned, it is important that a portion of the staff persons time (commensurate with need/utility size) is dedicated to conservation activities.

- A coordinator's sole focus is reducing water use in the community. He or she is able to methodically plan and carry out a water conservation program without the distractions and/or demands of other duties.
- Existing staff may not have the desired skill set of a coordinator.

In regards to funding the position, there are several models water suppliers could consider. A large utility may find it necessary to hire at least one full-time person. In other parts of the country, water suppliers have a staff of water conservation specialists. Smaller utilities can hire someone on a part time basis or even share a person among two or three towns. Additionally, this person could share duties, and in addition to working on the conservation program, also cover responsibilities such as public outreach, consumer confidence reporting, etc. Hiring a contractor to carry out water conservation activities is yet another option.

Typical job duties of a water conservation coordinator include:

- Establish water conservation goals.
- Develop water conservation program.
- Identifies and assesses conservation incentives appropriate for implementation.
- Analyzes costs and benefits of a water conservation program, and clearly identifies those that benefit the water system.
- Studies various rate structures to encourage conservation and to pay for conservation programs.
- Answers public inquiries.
- Coordinates with state and federal government.
- Implements leak detection programs both for the utility and customers.

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- Creates and implements promotional and marketing campaign aimed at achieving water conservation program goals.
- Assists residential, commercial and institutional customers in conserving water.
- Administer and enforces local water regulations and restrictions.
- Designs and writes water conservation outreach material, including letters to the editor, bill inserts, brochures and web site content.
- Conducts presentations at various forums including stakeholder groups, schools, clubs and business associations.
- Helps educate other water department staff and other sectors in municipal government on the importance of water conservation.