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## Water efficiency management systems — Requirements with guidance for use

*Systèmes de management de l'utilisation efficace de l'eau —  
Exigences et recommandations d'utilisation*



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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 224, *Service activities relating to drinking water supply, wastewater and stormwater systems*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

Water is essential to life and forms part of the environment. Global concern for the state of the environment has identified that water resources are subject to significant pressures from water demand and from the impacts of climate change. The pressures on organizations to implement water efficiency programmes can arise from limited water resources and exist particularly in resource exploitation activities such as mining, forestry, oil and gas extraction, and in agriculture. They might also arise from commercial, institutional and industrial activities whether water is supplied by water utilities or comes directly from the environment.

As pressure grows to improve the quality of the environment and increase sustainability, organizations of all types and sizes are increasingly turning their attention to the environmental impacts of their activities, products and services. This might include measuring the water footprint of an activity or striving towards a more efficient use of water within an organization. Achieving sound water efficiency performance requires organizational commitment to a systematic approach and to the achievement of continual improvement in water use through a water efficiency management system.

Water efficiency management, like quality management, environmental management and energy management could be a matter of vital interest in promoting sustainable economic activities, industries and ultimately a sustainable environment. The introduction of water efficiency programs is often, but not always, triggered by a shortage in water supply.

The purpose of this document is to enable organizations to assess and account for their water use, and to identify, plan and implement measures to achieve water savings through the systematic management of water. Successful implementation depends on commitment from all levels and functions within the organization, especially commitment by top management.

This document specifies water efficiency management system requirements and contains guidance for its use. Using this document, an organization can develop and implement a water efficiency policy through the establishment of objectives, targets, action plans, monitoring, benchmarking, and review programs. These should take into account any requirements related to significant water use. A water efficiency management system enables an organization to achieve its relevant policy commitments and take action as needed to improve its water management according to the requirements of this document. This document can apply to some or all of the activities under the control of the organization. Application of this document may be tailored to fit the specific requirements of the organization, including the complexity of its system, the degree of documentation and available resources.

In any organization, water might be used for a variety of purposes, including the following:

- a) cleaning;
- b) transportation;
- c) heating and cooling;
- d) manufacturing a product and as part of a product;
- e) drinking;
- f) sanitation;
- g) irrigation;
- h) fire suppression;
- i) recreational, water sport and aesthetic purposes.

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The adoption and proper implementation of a water efficiency management system is intended to result in improved water efficiency and can help to achieve the following outcomes:

- 1) identifying water as a resource that can be considered as part of organizational and budgetary planning;
- 2) assisting an organization to better manage water use and optimize water demand;
- 3) recognizing the impact on others that can occur with changing water use;
- 4) ensuring a greater level of accountability in water use;
- 5) providing a process for regular review for possible improvement and adoption of opportunities arising in water efficiency.