

## SHSD Recommendations for Periodic Cleaning of Water Coolers

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**Purpose:** This document describes an acceptable procedure for cleaning bottled-water dispensers and storing bottled water. It covers the handling of bottles for replacement and general hygiene practices regarding bottled water and their dispensers (coolers). The goal of the procedure is to provide a uniform protocol to control microbiological contamination in water coolers. This procedure does not pertain to tap-supplied potable water.

**Personal Protective Equipment:** Safety glasses with side shields and disposable gloves (natural latex rubber, nitrile, PVC) must be used when mixing and handling the bleach solutions used in disinfections.



**Placement of Water Coolers and Storage of Water Bottles:** Water-dispenser and unused bottle should not be located in areas of where the equipment has the potential to become contaminated with chemicals, bacteria, radiation, or other harmful substances.

**Frequency of Cleaning:** Clean your bottled-water dispenser:

- With every bottle change, or
- Every six weeks, whichever comes first.

### **Equipment**

Water Dispenser

Bottled Water

Bleach Solution

Sponge

Bucket

### **Procedure:**

- **Preparing *Bleach Solution***
- **Cleaning of Water Dispenser**
- **Cleaning Your Drip Tray**
- **Replacing Bottle**

#### **1.0 Preparing *Bleach Solution***

Prepare a disinfecting solution by adding one tablespoon (15ml) household bleach per gallon (4.5L) of water solution. Label the *Bleach Solution* container with your name, the contents, and the date. *Bleach Solution* must be used within 30 days.

## **2.0 Cleaning of Water Dispenser**

***NOTE: This procedure is most easily performed before changing out an empty bottle.***

- 2.1 Unplug the cord from electrical outlet of water dispenser
- 2.2 Remove empty bottle.
- 2.3 Use disposable gloves and safety glasses when working with bleach.
- 2.4 Using the sponge scrub in interior surface of the water cooler reservoir thoroughly with the *Bleach Solution* and let stand for not less than two minutes (to be effective) but not more than five minutes (to prevent corrosion)
- 2.5 Drain the *Bleach Solution* from reservoir through faucet(s) into a bucket.
- 2.6 Dispose of the *Bleach Solution* into the sanitary system.
- 2.7 Rinse the reservoir thoroughly by filling the reservoir with clean tap water or bottled water four (4) times. Drain the rinse water through cooler faucets into a bucket. This will remove traces of the *Bleach Solution*.
- 2.8 Dispose of rinse water into the sanitary system.

***NOTE: Do NOT use Fantastic™ cleaner or similar products on plastic parts. These products contain chemicals that can cause the plastics to become brittle and discolored.***

## **3.0 Cleaning Your Drip Tray**

- 3.1 Lift off drip tray.
- 3.2 Remove the screen and wash both tray and screen in mild detergent or *Bleach Solution*.
- 3.3 Rinse well in clean tap water and replace on cooler.

## **4.0 Replacing Bottle**

- 4.1 Wash your hands with soap and warm water or use disposable protective gloves before handling the bottle.
- 4.2 Wipe the top and neck of the new bottle with a sponge or paper towel dipped in *Bleach Solution*.
- 4.3 Check the expiration date on the bottle, do not use if expiration date has been exceeded.
- 4.4 Remove cap from new bottle.
- 4.5 Place new bottle on the water dispenser.

## **Appendix**

### **Principles for Safe Handling and Use of Bottle Water Sources**

#### **Bottled Water Storage**

- Store indoors in a clean, cool, dry, well ventilated space.
- Do not store in rooms or areas used for chemicals, bacteria samples, or radioactive articles, paint, or janitorial supplies, etc.
- Do not store in direct sunlight or above room temperature.
- Do not store water for more than 30 days. Like many other food products, bottled water normally contains low numbers of harmless bacteria as processed by the bottling company. During prolonged storage at room temperatures, these bacteria can multiply rapidly.

#### **Inappropriate Bottle Water uses**

- Because bottled water normally contains low numbers of harmless bacteria even as processed by the bottling company:
  - Do not use bottled water to clean contact lenses
  - Do not use bottled water for babies or infants.
  - If you are a member of any immune deficient population, do not use bottled water.

#### **Bottled Water Hygiene**

- Wash hands thoroughly after washroom breaks, after handling dirty items such as money, and BEFORE touching water containers. Water coolers can become contaminated with bacteria that originate from non-sanitary practices.
- Do NOT touch the end of the water cooler spigot with your hands or any items such as glasses, cups, or small water bottles that have come in contact with your mouth.