Bottled Water Cooler Unit Cleaning and Sanitizing Procedure

Water cooler units need special care, treatment and cleaning to ensure that fresh bottles of water are not contaminated by the dispensing unit. The water bottles must also be handled, stored and decanted in a sanitary manner to prevent introduction of bacteria. All water bottles should be clean, properly labeled with manufacture address, best before or manufactured on date, chemical list and contact information.

Some of the problems that have been associated with water cooler dispensing units are:

1) The water becoming contaminated when opened and placed on the units by airborne contaminants, dirty lips of the bottles or unwashed hands.

2) The units located in heavily contaminated environments such as machine shops or high traffic areas.

3) The lack of a sanitizer in the water to protect against growth if contaminants from the water cooler unit.

4) Storage at room temperature and sunlight increases bacteriological growth.

5) Inadequate cleaning and maintaining of the units themselves- the reservoir, the spigots, and the internal portions that come in contact with the water.

Clean and sanitize your water cooler before changing the bottle or when moving the unit to a new location.

NOTE: *the following cleaning procedure is a general recommendation only; please refer to the manufacture's directions for cleaning and disinfection of the water cooler unit.*

- Unplug cooler unit.
- Wash your hands with warm soapy water.
- Dismantle any removable pieces and wash them with hot, soapy water. Rinse pieces with clean water and then soak them in a 100 ppm chlorine solution (two teaspoons (10ml) of bleach to 4 cups (1L) of water) for at least 1 minute to sanitize. Remove from solution and air dry.
- Use a clean cloth and hot, soapy water to wash all stationary, accessible parts such as the bottle reservoir, and spigots. Rinse with clean water then thoroughly wipe each part with a 200 ppm chlorine solution (4 teaspoons of bleach (20ml) to 4 cups (1L) of water). Let air dry.
- Reassemble all components.
- Fill 5 gallon water bottle half full and add 6 ounces of household bleach. Place bottle onto cooler unit. Open both spigots to draw chlorine solution into the pipes. Turn off spigots and let solution stand in unit for 5 minutes. Drain off chlorine solution through both spigots.
- Rinse 5 gallon water bottle and refill half full with clean drinking water. Place half full bottle on the unit and drain through both spigots to rinse. Allow to air dry.
- Wipe the top and neck of the new bottle with a paper towel dipped in 100ppm household bleach solution (two teaspoons (10ml) of bleach to 4 cups (1L) of water).
- If you plan to transport the unit or place it in storage, follow the steps below.
- Cover spigots to protect from contamination with clean plastic (such as cling wrap or sandwich bags). Cover top bottle reservoir to protect from contamination with clean cling wrap.
- Store and transport cleaned and sanitized units in a clean plastic bag (such as a garbage bag, tied shut).
- Transport to site. Unwrap. Place a new 5 gallon bottle on the unit and plug in power cord.

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