

What to do when the Water Stops Working in Your Dental Practice

A Step-by-Step Guide

A sudden loss of water in a dental office can disrupt operations and impact patient care. This guide is designed to help dental professionals respond quickly and appropriately when water service is interrupted.

- **Pause all procedures** requiring water
- ****Turn off vacuum**
- Check if the issue is isolated or office-wide
- **Inspect plumbing and equipment** for *****no power**, closed valves or clogged filters
- **Notify staff and inform patients** of potential delays or rescheduling needs

**Wet ring vacuum systems only
***If equipped with remote water control valve, filter would need to be **BYPASSED** temporarily to allow water flow if **no power** is present.



Remote water control valve w/ filter

Who should I call first?

- **Facilities manager or landlord** (for shared buildings)
- **Dental Equipment Service technician** (if delivery system-related)
- **Licensed Plumber** (for standalone practices)

What are common causes of water failure?

- Municipal water outages
- Burst pipes or valve issues
- Frozen or blocked lines
- Faulty remote water control valve (**see bypass example**)
- Malfunction in reverse osmosis system or filters
- Delivery unit or bottle system failure



Bottle-Fed System

Are there temporary solutions to continue seeing patients?

Possibly, if you can still maintain infection control:

- Use **portable dental units** or **bottle-fed systems**.
- Use **bottled sterile water** for rinsing or irrigation.
- Use **bottled distilled water** for **autoclave** if your practice is equipped with an under-sink or tabletop water distiller.

Can I still use my dental vacuum system?

Possibly, if you have a **Dry Vacuum system only,** confirm with a local dental technician if you are uncertain.

- **Identify that you have a dry vacuum system.**
- **Dry vacuum** systems do not need water to operate; water is used to flush the collection tank only.
- **Surgical "Compressor style" vacuum systems** require a canister in each procedure room, liquids/solids should never enter systems negative pressure tank.
- **DO NOT RUN wet ring** vacuum systems without water; this will cause it to overheat and fail prematurely.



Wet Ring Vacuum Example

How can I prevent this in the future?

- Schedule routine plumbing and equipment maintenance.
- Replace waterline filters regularly.
- Keep an emergency water supply on hand.
- Create a response plan and train staff on it.

About Masserano Practice Design & Development

At Masserano Practice Design & Development and Align, we specialize in helping dental professionals build practices that are efficient, resilient, and designed for long-term success. From real estate strategy and architectural planning to equipment integration and operational workflows, we bring decades of experience guiding doctors through every phase of their practice journey - including how to prepare for and respond to the unexpected.

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