

## Bottle Refill Station Guide

The University of Michigan began replacing water fountains with bottle refill stations throughout campus in 2010 to promote healthy habits and the use of reusable water bottles. The stations have proven very popular. As of 2019, there are over 300 water refill stations on campus and many people have migrated away from single-use bottled water, supporting U-M’s waste reduction goal.

Interested in installing a bottle refill station in your space? This guide is designed to streamline the process.

### Select the right style for your location.

#### Gooseneck

Gooseneck style faucets (“glass filler kits”) can be attached to some water fountains and are more economical than a complete replacement with a water refill station. Non-bowl style water fountains must have a “punch-out” on the top surface to accept a gooseneck attachment.

Goosenecks can be attached to bowl style water fountains. A hole is drilled in the “arm” of the unit. Here’s an example from the Ross School of Business.



Gooseneck faucets like the one at right can also be installed in restrooms.



#### Refill Station Retrofit

If the water fountain is working and is one of the following styles, it could be converted to a water refill station. The cost is approximately one half the cost of a new water refill station installation.

Brand	Water fountain model	Retrofit model
Elkay	EZ and LZ water coolers	<a href="#">Retrofit options</a>
Halsey Taylor	HAC model water cooler	<a href="#">HAC Retrofit options</a>



Hopefully one of these options will work for the proposed location. If so, proceed with placing a work order via the Facilities Service Center ([requests.fo.umich.edu](http://requests.fo.umich.edu) or 7-2059) and indicate your style preference.

If these won’t work for the proposed location, proceed with the following steps.

## New Fountain Installation

**Step One:** Replacement of a water fountain with a different style unit requires Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. ADA requires one sitting and one standing height water fountain per floor. To determine the proper height and accessories, evaluate the following:

- Height of the current water fountains on the building floor being evaluated. There must be:
  - At least one sitting height fountain (36" **maximum** spout height)
  - At least one standing height fountain (38" **minimum** - 43" spout height)

If you have two water fountains and they are both currently sitting height, the replacement fountain should be installed at standing height.

- Profile of the fountain you want to replace to the hallway. If the fountain will protrude more than four inches into the hallway, the front lower edge that protrudes must be 27 inches or lower to allow for cane detection. The sitting height can be installed to meet this requirement. If you are installing at standing height, an apron will need to be purchased.

Document your findings with photographs of the current water fountains and the measurements and number of fountains on the floor.

If the height and accessory requirements can be satisfied, move to Step Two. If the conditions do not satisfy the requirements, contact Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEC) for suggestions regarding building code and ADA compliance.

**Step Two:** Determine the style that is right for the building and floor.

**Standard equipment:** [Elkay water refill station units](#) are the typical unit used on campus. They have been competitively priced for U-M. This combination kit combines the water refill portion with a traditional water fountain or "bubbler."

**In-wall design or surface mounted:** These can be installed as additional water locations but cannot be used to replace existing drinking fountains. These designs do not provide a "bubbler" (what is commonly referred to as the water fountain).

- [Elkay](#)
- [Brita hydration station](#)
- [Halsey Taylor](#)

**Filter and chiller choices:**

- University plumbers recommend selecting a model that contains a filter because it will extend the life expectancy of the unit. A high usage location might need a filter change every 3-6 months. If the existing water fountain had a separate filter attached, the new water refill station should contain a filter as well.
- Water refill stations can be selected with or without a chiller unit. Chiller units keep the water colder but also contribute to the energy cost for the fountain. If the location has high usage, the water will generally be cold from constant use and a chiller unit would not be necessary.

**Step Three:** Request a cost estimate and/or place a work order via the Facilities Service Center (<https://requests.fo.umich.edu/> or 734-647-2059).

NOTE: Be very specific regarding the location, the specifications of the existing fountains on the floor, the style selected and reasoning. Add **wtrrfi-2016** to the project field on the work order. This information will help Facilities & Operations provide the most accurate estimate.

Within five days a budget estimate or within 30 days a fixed priced estimate will be provided.

Once the estimate is accepted, a representative will contact the individual listed on the work order to schedule the installation of this new equipment.

**FAQ: What's the approximate installation cost and why does it vary?**

The installation cost will vary based on location-specific conditions. The cost could be as low as \$1,500 or in some cases exceed \$5,000. With any new water fountain installation, unexpected construction issues beyond removing the old unit and installing the new one might add to the cost. Electrical may need to be moved (older units have the electric outside of the water fountain space, whereas newer units are within the footprint of the fountain) or there might be a very small window for the plumbing. The change in height of a fountain to accommodate code/ADA requirements might require movement of the stack or drain.