waterwise

Environment Agency

THE WATERWISE GUIDE FOR OFFICES

FOR WATERWISE BUSINESSES AND FACILITIES MANAGERS

WATER AT WORK

- The average person in the UK uses around 143 litres of water a day at home. But they also use water when they are out and about, including at work.
- Office and Facilities Managers can make small but effective changes to reduce the water used in the office.
- Saving water will save money on your water bill if you are on a water meter (which most businesses are), and saving hot water will reduce your energy bill and carbon footprint too.

WHY SAVE WATER?

1. Reduce your office operating costs for water and energy.
2. Reduce your carbon emissions and improve your business' CSR.
3. Ensure resilience of supply for the future (imagine if your business lost supply for a day - would you cope?).
4. Every litre of water used is a litre less for the environment and wildlife.
5. Climate change is resulting in drier weather throughout the UK. Our water is more precious than ever.

START WITH YOUR BUILDING

Get your building and its water appliances audited to make sure they are water-efficient. Remember to check for leaking taps, toilets or pipes. You could fit tap aerators or more efficient showerheads to reduce the flow of water. Once you have done all those things, Waterwise has a Checkmark for Offices accreditation to formalise and celebrate your building's water efficiency credentials. Email info@waterwise.org.uk for more information.

DON'T FORGET LEAKY LOOS

Toilets don't have to be leaking onto the floor to waste water. 5-8% of toilets are leaking at any one time, often silently from the cistern into the bowl. This can waste 215 - 400 litres of clean drinking water per toilet every day - an estimated 400 million litres of water leaking from UK toilets every day! Put a sheet of toilet paper on the back of the bowl, above the water, and if it gets wet then you might have a leak. If you find a leak in the office, fix it straight away.

CULTURE AND BEHAVIOURS

Saving water isn't just about fixtures and fittings - it's also about office culture and people's daily habits. Talk to your colleagues about water efficiency and encourage specific behaviour changes. Make sure water is discussed at any energy or environmental groups that you already have. Use the Waterwise posters (found on our website) to prompt positive behaviours around the office. 13 out of 14 people don't know which button to press on a dual flush toilet, for example, so posters can really help to inform staff.

WATER SAVING WEEK

Encourage your whole company to take part in Waterwise's annual Water Saving Week in May! Each day of the week has a different water theme and focus, with actions to make real changes at home and at work. You could hold internal events at the office or be part of something bigger by promoting water efficiency on social media and joining our campaign. Get in touch with Waterwise for more information or to sponsor one of the themed days, and follow @waterwise to keep up to date.

WATER RETAILERS

To become a more water-efficient business, a good place to start is with your water retailer. Call your retailer and ask them what they can offer you to help save water and money. Remember, as of 2017 all businesses in England and Scotland can switch water retailer and there are lots of deals and water-saving incentives available. Are you aware of the benefits of switching? Waterwise has produced a handy guide to switching retail provider which you can find on our website.

BENCHMARKING

The good news is that if your company uses more than 15 litres per person per day you can probably save some water and money!

If you have a highly variable number of staff in your office, you might find it useful to consider a floor area factor for benchmarking. Simply divide your water use, in m3 per year, by the floor area of your office in m2.

If your calculated consumption is higher than around 0.55m3 per m2 per year then it is highly likely you could save water.

WATER SAVING TIPS

CHECK YOUR METER

Pick someone to check the meter every month and get used to the readings so that they can highlight any change in usage - this might indicate a leak.

PER PERSON USAGE

Work out how much water each employee uses a day and communicate this around your office. If your calculated consumption is higher than around 15 litres per person per day then it is highly likely you could save water.

DON'T FORGET THE CANTEEN

Remember that if you have a canteen at work there will be lots of water used there, and potential to save some. Even if the taps are water-efficient people might be leaving them running!

LEAKS

Find a time when the office is not being used and take a meter reading. Don't use any water for a few hours and check the meters again. If there has been an increase, either you might ave a leak or there could be automatic devices such as urinals which could be wasting water when they are not needed.

UNCONTROLLED URINALS

Check that your urinals only flush when they are needed. They shouldn't be constantly flushing, but this is extremely common. Modern systems flush far less frequently or use chemicals instead.

THE FIRST CHECKMARK

Welsh Water was the first company in the UK to achieve the Waterwise Checkmark for Offices. As well as fulfilling the criteria to pass, Welsh Water carried out a trial of new, water-efficient showerheads in the staff showers. They demonstrated great leadership in water-efficient building standards and led the way by testing and giving feedback on the Checkmark process which is now open to all businesses.

"*Welsh Water are honoured to be the first water company to receive the Waterwise Checkmark award. We regularly carry out water efficiency audits of all our office buildings to ensure a high standard of efficiency. The application process was easy to understand, and we are planning subsequent applications to cover all Welsh Water offices.*"