

Your water efficiency audit

Work your way through the short checklist below, following the instructions in steps A to G, to get the full picture on how, where, when and why water is being used within your business.

Throughout this audit we'll guide you towards common sources of water waste and highlight areas where businesses often find they can cut down. As you go, keep a note of opportunities you spot to save water.

Step A.

If you have a water meter, use it to check for internal plumbing leaks.

Choose a time when your business is closed. Make sure that no water is being used. **With your internal stop valve open**, check your water meter. If the dial is turning, you could have a leak.

Sometimes it can be difficult to tell if the meter dial is turning. One way to make sure is to note your meter reading, then leave your water switched off overnight or for a number of hours. If your meter reading has changed after this period then you may have a leak.

Was your meter dial turning or did the reading change overnight?

es No

If no, great news! You don't have a leak. Skip to Step C.

If yes, you might have a leak. Go to Step B to determine where it is.



Step B.

Check for external leaks.

This time, **close your building's internal stop valve** and check your meter again. You're looking to see if the dial is still turning. You may need to leave it turned off for a number of hours and check the reading again to be sure.

Was your meter dial turning or did the reading change?

Yes

No

If no, this means your leak may be within your internal pipework. Call a plumber to come and fix it straight away.

If yes, this means your leak is between your meter and the stop valve. Call a plumber to come and fix it straight away.

Notes/comments

Step C.

Compare your recent bills.

Find as many recent water bills as you can. Compare the amount of each bill. If your business has other similar premises, ask if you can compare and contrast your recent bills against theirs.

Are your recent bills much higher than your older bills or the bills from other similar properties?

Yes

No



If no, this suggests that your consumption is in pretty good shape. Go to the Step D.

If yes, you should think about what could be causing your bills to be higher.

If your consumption has risen recently, think about what could have changed. A new additional colleague? A new business practice? A new piece of equipment? Make a note of anything you think of.

If your consumption is higher than similar premises, think of any significant differences between the sites. Are there any water-intensive practices or activities which might be driving your consumption up? Is there any different equipment? Make a note of anything you can think of.





Step D.

Assess your plumbed water appliances.

Plumbed water appliances, usually found in kitchens and bathrooms, are a common source of inefficiency. Run through the following list to consider the main offenders.

Are all your taps drip-free?

Yes



No

A dripping tap can waste as much as 90 litres of water a week. Replace a tap's washer as soon as a drip is noticed. You can also invest in tap aerators to reduce flow.

Notes/comments

Do colleagues sometimes leave taps running?

Yes



No

You can retrofit self-closing taps to prevent waste. These switch off automatically after a specified time. Many models have in-built flow restrictors, which can further reduce water waste. If not, you can add tap aerators to reduce flow.

A cheaper option is to place stickers or posters near the sink area to remind team members to turn taps off after use.

Notes/comments

Are plugs fitted in the basins?

Yes

No

Replace missing or ill-fitting plugs. Captive plugs encourage users to fill the basin, rather than use running water. Again, posters or stickers are a good way of reminding colleagues about best practice.

Notes/comments

Is the flow of water from your taps excessive?

Yes



No

A flow of six litres per minute should be enough for hand washing purposes. A plumber can check this for you.



Are the toilet cisterns operating effectively?

Yes

No

Make sure cisterns aren't leaking.

If you don't have dual-flush mechanisms fitted, consider adding them. If you do have them, consider how a sticker or poster could encourage colleagues to use the small flush whenever possible.

If you don't have dual flush cisterns and can't afford to fit them, consider adding displacement devices like Hippos, which reduce the volume of a standard flush.

Notes/comments

Are your showers operating efficiently?

Yes



No



Many office spaces and workplaces offer showering facilities for their colleagues, and these can be a common source of inefficiency.

Check for leaking or dripping shower units.

Consider installing push-button timer controls and low-flow heads to reduce the opportunity for water waste. Low-cost options include a shower timer and posters or stickers, aimed at reminding colleagues to keep shower time to a minimum.

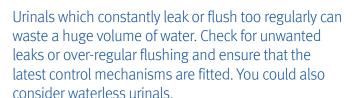
Notes/comments

Are the urinals fitted with water efficient controls?

Yes



No



Notes/comments

Need some new parts?

Head to our online Water Saving Shop at business-stream-shop.co.uk for best-selling water efficient shower heads, taps, valves, urinal controls and more.



Step E.

Check your water pressure.

Is your water pressure at the minimum level for your needs?

Yes

No

High water pressure can cause pinhole leaks in your water system, which can lead to major leaks and wider issues including serious property damage.

Try to ensure your water pressure is at the lowest level it can be for your needs. A plumber can check this for you.

Notes/comments

Step F.

Consider how your business uses water in its wider operations.

If your business uses water as part of its wider, everyday operations (e.g. washing equipment), consider how you might be able to reduce your consumption (e.g. washing equipment in bulk).

Can you minimise the water your business uses in its essential processes?

Yes

No

Are there any best-practices you can apply to your business processes to help reduce the water they use? When was the last time you carried out research into water efficiency in your industry?

Try searching the internet or your industry press for the latest in best practice, or visit business stream.co.uk/our-services for help.

Notes/comments

Are all the ways in which your business uses water essential?

Yes



No

Consider all the ways your business uses water, from core processes, to wider building and ground maintenance. Are all of these activities essential and operating as efficiently as they could?

If they are essential, consider if you could do them less without causing issues?



Do you maintain grounds and outdoor spaces?

Yes

No

Maintenance of outside spaces can lead to excessive water use, especially in the summer months.

Avoid lawns if you can. If you have lawns, water only when essential. Water substantially once a week to encourage grass to root further down. In time they'll need less watering. Fit trigger nozzles to hoses to prevent accidental leakages.

When landscaping, use existing plants and native species, both of which will require less water.

Notes/comments

Is your business able to recycle water?

Yes

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Rainwater harvesting: rainwater from roofs or large paved areas (e.g. car parks) can be recycled and used for toilet flushing, vehicle washing or watering plants.

Greywater recycling: waste water from washroom basins and showers can be recycled and used for flushing toilets or watering grounds and gardens.

Notes/comments

Step G.

Chat to your colleagues.

Your team of colleagues are key to the success of your water efficiency efforts. Getting their buy-in will increase the chances of your long-term success and asking their opinion will really help.

Talk to them through the highlights of what you've learned so far from this audit. Ask them for their ideas on how you could do things differently to use less water. They might have even spotted something you've overlooked or not been aware of.

Notes/comments

Looking to save water outside?

Visit the gardening section of our online Water Saving Shop at business-stream-shop.co.uk/product-category/gardening for a range of water butts and composters.



Good luck on your water efficiency journey

If you have any questions, we're here to help.

Visit business-stream.co.uk/contact-us to get in touch.

Business Stream is passionate about the benefits of saving water for both customers and the environment.

Naturally different.