

Doing our bit for the planet

A guide to
being efficient
with our most
precious resource

Only 2% of the earth's water is suitable for drinking, and less than 1% of it is actually accessible. Populations are growing, the world is getting warmer and demand for water is higher than ever. This is our guide to helping us all make the most of what we have.

Did you know?
The average person
uses 150 litres of
water every day

The water experts

business stream
A SCOTTISH WATER COMPANY



Your water footprint

The amount of water you use every day is called your water footprint. It includes the water you use at home and at work, directly and indirectly. Your water footprint is closely linked to your carbon footprint, so by being water efficient, you can help reduce your carbon footprint too.

Why save water?

• Save money

Over 90% of your bill is made up of the wholesale cost of the water you use, so using less will make a big impact on your bottom line. You should also see a saving on your energy costs, as you'll be heating less water too.

• Help the environment

When you cut back on the amount of water you use, you help preserve natural resources and protect precious eco-systems. So, taking action can help you achieve your corporate social responsibility targets.

• Reduce your carbon footprint

Processing and transporting water releases CO₂ into the atmosphere. By using less water you'll help cut emissions and hit your carbon reduction targets. If you're a public sector body, that includes your Green Action Plan.

Even small changes make a positive difference

Give yourself a water health check

See how much water your business is using with our water efficiency assessment pack.

You can download it at business-stream.co.uk/water-efficiency-assessment

Did you know?
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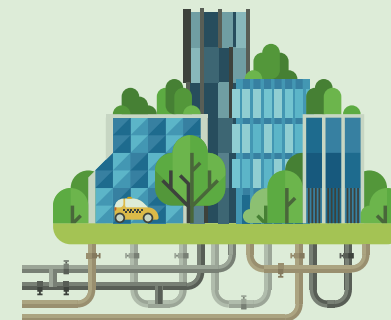
How water gets to you, and where it goes

To understanding how water arrives at your tap and where it goes next is important - each stage has a commercial and environmental cost.



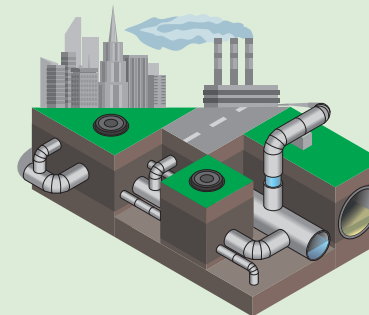
Stage 1: water is collected and treated...

Rain and river water is collected from the natural environment and pumped to a treatment works where it's filtered, cleaned and made suitable for drinking. After it's been treated, it's pumped to storage tanks.



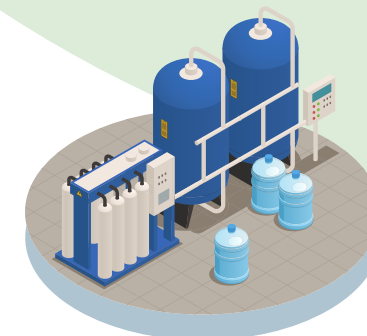
Stage 2: it's pumped through the network to you...

Regional water network operators transport this water through thousands of miles of pipes and ducts to connect the supply to your business, ready for you to use.



Stage 3: you use it and it drains away...

Once you're finished with it, the water journey is far from over – every drop must be transported and treated again. Drainage water, rainwater run-off from roads and buildings, and industrial waste water is all treated too.



Stage 4: it's filtered, strained and cleaned...

Processing waste water is even more expensive and carbon-intensive than treating water collected from the natural environment.



Stage 5: it's finally returned to nature

Only when all the processing is complete can the clean waste water be returned to the environment.

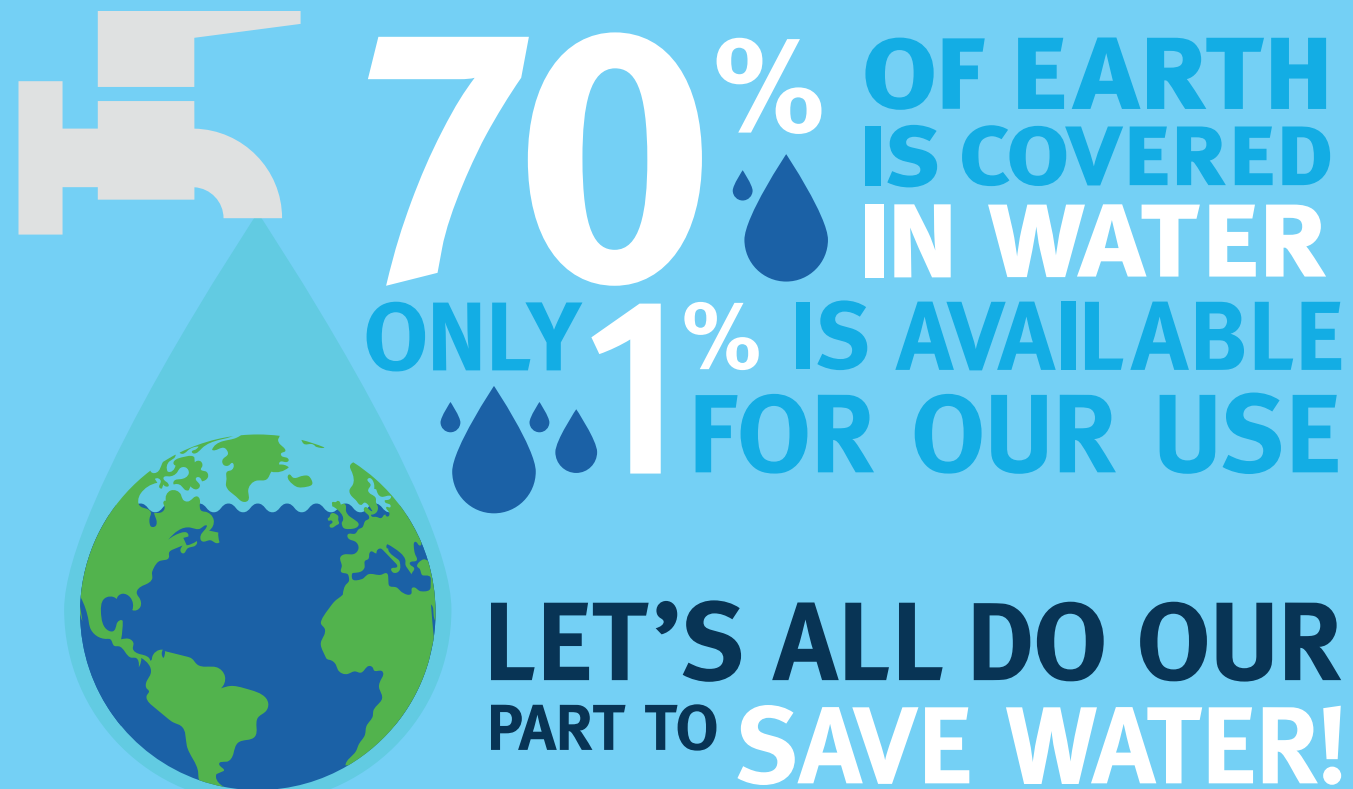
What Business Stream does

In the non-domestic market, Business Stream looks after you, the customer. We read your meters, issue your bills, help you save, and make sure you get the seamless service you deserve.

It's your regional wholesaler who is responsible for operating the network that provides safe drinking water to homes and businesses. They're responsible for taking away and treating waste water too – that's why the majority of your bill goes straight to them.

As populations grow and the world gets warmer, the demand for water increases. As a responsible retailer, we're working hard with customers like you to cut our collective water usage and protect the environment. We've pledged to help you reduce your consumption by up to 20%. There's more on our pledge later in the pack.

We're committed to making a positive difference for the environment



business stream
A SCOTTISH WATER COMPANY

A case study

Britain's chalk streams

What are the chalk streams?

Chalk streams are streams that flow through chalk hills towards the sea. They're typically wide and shallow, and the filtering effect of the chalk makes their waters alkaline and very clear.

While less than a fifth of England's rivers are considered to be healthy, the fast-flowing, naturally alkaline waters of the chalk streams are a rare source of clean water – rated Class A by the Environment Agency, the highest achievable grade.

85% of the world's chalk streams are in UK, lying in many of the southern counties of England. Yet this unique and precious eco-system is under attack from society's increasing appetite for water.

Why are they important?

Chalk Streams provide a home for wildlife including otters, kingfishers, world-renowned rainbow trout and salmon. They're places that provide endless hours of beauty and enjoyment to locals, which are central to the region's culture. But crucially, they're fed from the same chalk aquifers that provide water to one of the most heavily populated parts of the UK.

How have they been impacted?

As the population has increased, household needs, industry and farming have all intensified, leading to more and more water being taken from the environment. As a result, these ancient natural eco-systems have begun drying up and dying out. They're a prime example of the real-life environmental impact of our water use.

What can be done?

Thankfully, local action groups are working with NGOs and water suppliers to protect the streams and reverse the trend. Responsibility lies with all of us to work together to prevent similar environmental damage occurring up and down the country.

For more on the chalk stream crisis, visit business-stream.co.uk/chalk-streams



Four simple steps to becoming more water efficient

Step 1: learn how much water you use

When you know what your average water consumption is, you'll know when things look right or wrong, helping you to spot opportunities to save.

Keeping an eye on your bills is a good place to start. You can also do a few simple meter reads to work out the business' average consumption for yourself.

How to work out your average daily consumption

1. Take a meter reading first thing in the morning
2. Take a second reading at the same time exactly a week or a month later
3. Subtract the first reading from the second reading, and divide it by the number of days between the readings.

This will show you roughly how much water you use each day. Repeat the process regularly to help keep track of your progress as you start to introduce new water efficiency measures.

Benchmark your usage

Find out how well you're doing by comparing your usage to others in your sector. Visit business-stream.co.uk/water-benchmark-calculator to determine where you sit in the crowd.

Step 2: check for leaks

It's important to check for leaks regularly. Leaks waste money by wasting water, but they can also cause serious damage to your property over time. General wear and tear or extreme weather can affect your pipes and cause leaks when you least expect it.

How do I know if I have a leak?

You may have noticed an unexplained spike in your water consumption or bills. But it's important to remember that you could still have a leak and not even realise it. Luckily, there's an easy way to check.

First, turn everything off that uses water

If possible, turn off all the taps and other appliances that use water. Then switch off internal water outlets – such as urinals, header tank or ice machines.

Next, check your meter

Check the leak indicator on your meter. If the dial stops and doesn't go around, you don't have a leak. If the leak indicator or numbers on the dial continue to turn, you may have a leak.

You can leave everything switched off and take a couple of meter reads a few hours apart, just to be sure.

Unexpected bill?

There could be many reasons your water bill is higher than you'd expected. Find out more in our handy checklist at www.business-stream.co.uk/high-consumption

Finally, switch off the main shut-off valve to the property

If the meter dial now stops, then the leak is within your property.

To locate an internal leak, check pipe joints, fittings and warning pipes. Leaks can be difficult to detect, so also look for areas that give clues. This could be dampness, or even an area of grass that remains luscious during dry seasons.

If the meter dial or leak indicator continues to turn, even with the main shut-off valve closed, then there's likely to be a leak between the meter and shut-off valve.

Step 3: fix those leaks

If you discover a leak, act quickly. Now's the time to contact a plumber, or get in touch with our Solutions team and use our leak detection and repair service at business-stream.co.uk/our-services

Covering the cost of a leak

If you have a leak, you may be able to get help to cover some of the costs of the waste water. You can apply for a leak allowance on our website. Visit business-stream.co.uk/leak-allowance-apply

Step 4: give yourself an efficiency audit

Check out our water efficiency tips so you can make sure your business is as watertight as possible. We've got advice for every room in your office, as well as a self-assessment tool that you and your employees can complete – it'll help your carbon footprint and your bottom line too!



Water efficiency tips

These handy tips will help you conserve water across every area of your business.

Bathroom

Toilets

Make sure you use efficient flush toilets and urinal controls - you could even consider waterless urinals. Make sure your staff know how to use a dual-flush.

Did you know

An estimated 400 million litres of water leaks from UK toilets every day. That's enough to supply the populations of Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol, Sheffield, Cardiff and Belfast combined!

Shower heads

If your business has showering facilities, make sure the shower heads are eco-friendly. Push-buttoned valves can help cut down shower times too.

Have you considered adding shower timers to encourage your staff to take shorter showers?

Taps

Flow restrictors, mixer taps and automatic sensors will all improve efficiency.

Did you know

A flowing tap produces between 6 and 15 litres of water every minute.

Kitchen

Hot Water

Investing in an eco-boiler that heats the water as you need it is a great way to save time and money. It prevents your staff from over-boiling the kettle, saving on water and energy.

Did you know

Waiting for the tap to run cold can waste 10 litres of water every day.

Equipment

If you have a dish-washer, glass-washer or use washing machines, make sure you buy the most water-efficient equipment, not just the most energy-efficient. Look out for the water label when purchasing appliances. Remember to use eco settings on all of your equipment too!

Oil disposal

Safe disposal of fat, oil and grease in your business will help prevent potential leaks. Don't put these waste products down your drains as they can solidify later and cause plumbing problems. Instead use grease separators, removers and dosing units to dispose of these substances.

Outside

Landscaping

Go native and natural

When considering business landscaping, choose as many existing trees and shrubs as possible. Established plants usually require less water and maintenance. Try to choose plants native to the UK too. Once established, they'll require very little to no water beyond normal rainfall.

Avoid lawns if you can

It's lovely to enjoy lunch outside on a warm day, but maintaining lawns can be water-intensive and expensive. Do you need to lay turf or are there alternatives?

Increase drainage

It might seem counter-intuitive, but consider working sand through your soil, to keep it porous and allow water to drain more effectively. This will encourage plants to root deeper into the ground, making them more resilient to drought.

Did you know

Sprinklers use up to 10,000 litres per hour. That's more than a family of four use in a day!

Lawn care

Water your lawns wisely

It's better to water your lawns heavily once a week, rather than lightly every day. This encourages the grass to root further down, delivering increased flood and drought-resistance. Water your lawns first thing in the morning for maximum impact.

If you can't avoid using a sprinkler, make sure you're not over-sprinkling. Catch water in a measuring jug to calculate sprinkler output. 3/4 to 1 inch of water is enough to apply each time you irrigate.

Consider letting lawns go brown in the summer. And remember, if you look after them during the winter, they'll survive the tougher times too.

Rain water harvesting

If you have a large building, it doesn't make sense to use drinking water to flush loos and watering plants when rainwater is perfectly good. Consider looking at rainwater harvesting systems to use grey water where possible.

Rain water collected in harvest butts can also be used to water lawns and plants.



Beyond Water: Embedded Water

When you're thinking about water efficiency, it's important to remember that it's about more than just the water that comes out of your tap. Water's crucial to so many more aspects of our lives, so it's essential that we change our attitudes towards a whole range of day-to-day activities.

Jargon buster: What does 'Embedded Water' mean?

'Embedded Water' is the term for the hidden water that's used to produce the things we take for granted. For example, it takes around 2,700 litres of water to produce one cotton t-shirt – that's enough for one person to drink for 900 days! What we mean is that it takes 2,700 litres to grow the cotton and physically construct the t-shirt – that's the 'Embedded Water' cost that we rarely think about.

Paper

It takes 10 litres of water to produce a single sheet of paper. Encourage your staff to only print the minimum and keep the rest on your computer. Could you even go completely paper free?

Travel

Motivate your staff to be more active on their daily commute. It takes between 13 and 27 litres of water to produce a single litre of petrol, so even car-sharing or public transport will make a huge difference.

Food

It takes 822 litres of water to produce one kilogram of apples, so it's important to reduce food wastage. Equally eating healthily saves water too, as it takes an astonishing 17,196 litres of water to produce a KG of chocolate; that's almost 21 times more than apples!

Our pledge

We're passionate about the benefits of saving water for our customers and the environment. That's why we're committed to helping customers save 20% on their water usage.

OUR WATER EFFICIENCY
PLEDGE

SAVE 20%
ON YOUR WATER USE

Claim your free tools

Claim your free *Water efficiency for staff* presentation, posters and *Water efficiency assessment* guide at business-stream.co.uk/water-efficiency-assessment

Waterwise

We're proud to be in partnership with Waterwise, a not-for-profit organisation aiming to make our world a better place by educating on water issues.

We've been awarded the Waterwise Checkmark for our commitment to water efficiency at our Headquarters in Edinburgh.

Our water efficiency solutions can help you achieve this checkmark too. Visit business-stream.co.uk/our-services

waterwise

“

We have long recognised Business Stream's commitment to promoting water efficiency and are delighted to be working with them to raise awareness of its importance. It's vital that water retailers help their customers reduce their water bills - to help them save money and reduce their impact on the environment. ”

Nicci Russell,
Managing Director Waterwise

Get in touch to find out more

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