

Savings Spotter Guide

Your DIY water efficiency

- ✓ Save water
- ✓ Save money
- ✓ Protect the planet

business stream
A SCOTTISH WATER COMPANY



Welcome to the start of your water efficiency journey

We'll guide you through our three-part journey to help you audit your water use and create a plan that will help you save more water across your business.



1

Get started

2

Fill in your
water efficiency
audit

3

Create an
action plan



Remember

Even small changes
can add up to make
a positive difference
to your water usage.

1

Get started

It's always best to begin any new venture with the proper preparation in place.

Put someone in charge

Appoint someone to take charge of the plan and get your colleagues involved in creating a more water efficient workplace.

Talk to your team

As with any business plan, full management and colleague support is essential. Let your colleagues know what you're trying to achieve. Positive communication can win their support, which in turn will help you achieve your objectives.

Get things in perspective

To give you a frame of reference when assessing your water use and to highlight where small changes can make a big difference, here are a few statistics around everyday water consumption:

- A running tap uses an average of six litres of water every minute.
- A single washing machine cycle with a full load uses roughly 45 litres of water.
- A single dishwasher load uses about 20 litres of water.
- A running hose will use about nine litres of water a minute.
- Taking a shower uses roughly 35 litres of water.



2

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?

Yes

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.

Notes/comments



2

Your water efficiency audit

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.

Notes/comments

2

Your water efficiency audit

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.

Notes/comments

2

Your water efficiency audit

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

Urinals which constantly leak or flush too regularly can waste a huge volume of water. Check for unwanted leaks or over-regular flushing and ensure that the latest control mechanisms are fitted. You could also consider waterless urinals.

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.

2

Your water efficiency audit

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?

Notes/comments

2

Your water efficiency audit

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 No

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.



3

Create an action plan

You've now completed your water efficiency audit. We hope you've identified a range of potential actions to help reduce your water use and you're ready to start turning those ideas into action.

Digest

Now is the time to go back over what you've learned and noted. Consider which options might be quick and easy to implement and which might take more time and investment.

Plan

Having given some thought to your options, put a plan together for implementing them. We've suggested some ways to create your plan below.

1. Phases

Are there some quick wins you can complete first, then add the bigger jobs at a later phase? Maybe some stages depend on others being completed upfront? Breaking your list down into smaller chunks will help keep things manageable.

2. Timescales

How quickly can you start? When do you aim to complete each of your phases by?

3. Responsibilities

Who will be responsible for each part of your plan?
Who else will need to be involved?

3

Create an action plan

Shop

You might be planning on installing some new water-saving devices around your business, especially in places that use the most water, like toilets, kitchen areas and outdoor spaces. For lots of handy regulators, taps, water butts and more, head to our online one-stop Water Saving Shop at business-stream-shop.co.uk.

Roll-out

Once your plan is in place and you know who's doing what, it's time to get started on the fun part of making it all happen.

Communicate

As you get the ball rolling and you put your first efficiency measures in place, make sure you communicate clearly with your wider team about everything you've done and what else you've got planned. Explain what you need from them to help make it a success.

Review

After your efficiency measures have been in place for a few months, review your consumption to check how much of an impact you've made

Share

Make sure you share the successes you've had with your team. Thank them for their help and inspire them to keep it up. You may even want to share progress and knowledge with your customers to help them save money and hit environmental targets.

Remember: Review your consumption and costs regularly

If you have a water meter and it's safe to read it, set some calendar reminders and get in the habit of reading it on a regular basis, keeping record each time. You'll see trends in your water usage and be able to identify potential leaks.

Secondly, make sure you keep reviewing your bills too. This way you can compare your actual consumption against your charges and check that they're accurate.

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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.

Our 20% pledge

Business Stream is passionate about the benefits of saving water for both customers and the environment. That's why we're committed to helping customers save up to 20% on their water usage.

Naturally different.