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Article

Five ways to save water, save money and save the planet

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Please note this content was curated for SME businesses in the UK

How does your small business use water? Probably for cleanliness and hygiene and in cooling and heating systems. Almost certainly in toilets. Maybe for preparing and serving food and drink. Perhaps for laundry, vehicle maintenance, health and beauty treatments, or in manufacturing and production. Whatever your reason for using water, it's likely to impact your business in many different ways.

But why should you care about saving water? The list of reasons might be longer than you think. Of course, it's important to conserve water for environmental reasons: using water efficiently helps preserve local water resources and natural ecosystems. But did you know that saving water could also save on bills, ensure compliance with environmental regulations, and lead to lower operational costs?

As a nation we waste enough water to fill 1,200 Olympic-sized swimming pools

every single day. According to one estimate, businesses across the UK use more than 30% of water than they need to. That's a lot of water, a lot of energy, and a lot of money wasted.

While the majority of wasted water comes from big corporations and people's homes, with nearly 5.5 million small businesses across the UK, businesses like yours have a vital role in saving water too. What's more, for businesses that run on tight budgets, saving water can deliver notable returns.

Why saving water is good business

Few people would argue with the view that saving water is good for the environment. As the world is getting warmer, sea levels are lowering, and water is becoming scarcer. Every valuable drop of water we use has been through a vast network of pipes, storage, treatment and cleaning processes before it arrives in our taps – all of which use energy and disrupt nature.

But there are business benefits to saving water too.

- **Lower utility bills**

Your business pays for every cubic metre of water it uses – and all the wasted water that flows into the sewer. As gas and electricity bills have skyrocketed, water might be one utility that offers genuine opportunities for making significant savings **(1)**.

- **Compliance with regulations**

Proactive water management could help your business respond to regulatory changes surrounding the consumption of energy, water and chemicals. The Federation of Small Businesses recommends using less water in order to comply with government policy and legislation on corporate sustainability **(2)**.

- **Lower maintenance costs**

Using less water means less wear and tear on your pipes and plumbing systems. Over time, this could lead to reduced maintenance costs and reduce the likelihood of costly leaks **(3)**.

So, as is the case with many sustainability initiatives, saving water has two broad benefits: supporting the environment and improving business performance.

Five practical steps for saving water in your business

How you save water will depend on your business. You might be a hairdresser making the switch to spray taps, a landscape gardener reusing water for plant irrigation, or a solicitor helping your staff remember simple water-efficient habits.

Here are five tips that could help reduce water waste. For more information on these and plenty more tips, check out the **Green Business Bureau.**

1. **Monitor your water usage**

Before you can work out how to save water, you need to know how much water your business uses – and where. Taking a few minutes to review your monthly water bill to spot variations in usage is a good start. You could also monitor use on indoor and outdoor fixtures, especially taps without self-closing mechanisms.

2. **Educate employees**

From remembering to turn taps off to filling the kettle only as high as you need to, there are lots of ways you and your employees can conserve water. You could place small reminder signs near water fixtures and even create company water-saving goals.

3. **Check your equipment**

Certain fixtures and items might be able to use water more efficiently. For example, you could install self-closing, low-flow taps, and make sure water-cooled air-conditioning units are used sparingly.

4. **Check your cleaning schedule**

Do you operate a fixed cleaning schedule? Could it be adapted to ‘cleaning as required’ to save water? You could also consider swapping wet for dry sweeping methods where possible.

5. **Talk to your plumber**

Keeping track of all your water usage might feel overwhelming – especially for busy small business owners. A straightforward visit from your plumber could help give you an idea of the best water-saving tactics for your business’s particular needs.

However your business uses water, there are many opportunities to use it more efficiently – potentially saving you money and helping you play your part in protecting this vital natural resource.

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Registered office: 22 Bishopsgate, London, EC2N 4BQ
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1 Tariff: https://www.tariff.com/guide/why-is-water-essential-for-business
2 Federation of Small Businesses: https://www.fsb.org.uk/resources-page/how-to-save-water-in-the-workplace.html
3 Business stream: https://www.business-stream.co.uk/blogs/save-water-to-reduce-your-energy-bills/

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