



# Your water audit guide

A water audit is a great way to get going on using less water and saving money on your bill.

## Getting started

### 1 Put someone in charge

Get someone to own your audit and the plans that come out of it. Also, get everyone at work involved in creating a water efficient workplace.

Support from everyone in your organisation is essential for any business plan, including for water. Make sure everyone knows what you're trying to achieve and be positive. It will help you achieve your objectives.

### 2 Review water use and costs

If you have a meter, take regular readings, ideally every month. Send them to us using your online MyAccount and keep a record of them.

You can use your readings to see the trends in your water use and to identify potential leaks if use is too high. Only take water meter reads if it's safe to though.

Review your bills as well to compare actual consumption against your charges and check they're accurate.

### 3 Assess your business

Use this checklist to survey how, where, when and why water is being used in your premises. It will direct you to common reasons for wasted water and highlight areas where you might find you can save water.

## Your water audit

Work your way through this checklist, keeping a note of opportunities you spot to save water.

### 1. If you have a water meter, check for internal plumbing leaks.

Choose a time when you're using no water on your premises, such as when it's closed or overnight.

Take a meter reading then wait 3 hours or more and take another reading. If the reading has changed and gone up you may have a leak.

**Did the meter reading change or was the dial turning?**

**Yes**

You might have a leak. Go to step 2 to determine where it is.

**No**

Good news - you don't have a leak. Skip to step 3

Notes

## 2. Check for external leaks

Turn off your internal stop tap (typically found under the sink), then take meter readings 3 hours or more apart again and look to see if the meter has gone up (or the dial is turning).

- Yes**  The leak is between your meter and the stop valve, we recommend calling a plumber as soon as possible to sort it out.
- No**  The leak is on your internal pipework and We recommend calling a WaterSafe approved plumber as soon as possible to sort it out.

Notes

## 3. Compare your recent bills

Gather as many recent water bills as you can, ideally based on actual reads. The best way to do this is by using your online MyAccount where you can view your current and all previous bills. Log into MyAccount at: [water-plus.co.uk](http://water-plus.co.uk)

Compare the amount of each bill. If you know of similar businesses, also in properties like yours, ask if you can compare your recent bills.

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

- Yes**  Has anything changed - new additional staff members? a new business practice? Make a note of anything you think of.
- If your consumption is higher than similar premises, what are the differences between the sites? Do you have equipment or processes that use more water or are wasting water unnecessarily? Make a note of anything you can think of and investigate ways to sort out any issues.
- No**  It doesn't sound like there is any major problems with your water use, but there's probably ways you can save water and cut costs.

Notes

## 4. Check out your taps, toilets and plumbed water appliances

These are all common sources of inefficiency and wasted water.

**Are all your taps drip-free?**

- Yes**  A dripping tap can waste as much as 90 litres of water a week.
- No**  Fixing them as soon as possible is important. Installing tap aerators to reduce flow is also great for water efficiency.

Notes

Do staff sometimes leave taps running?

Yes

Installing self closing taps is a great way to stop wasted water. They automatically switch off after a set time.

No

A cheaper option is to have signs by the sink asking everyone to turn off taps.

Notes

Are plugs fitted in the basins?

Yes

**Replace missing or ill-fitting plugs.**

Captive plugs (where the plug is built in and can't be removed) are good for encouraging people to use the tap and fill the basin, rather than use running water. Signs also help to remind people about best practice to not waste water

No

Notes

Is the flow of water from your taps excessive?

Yes

**A flow of six litres per minute** should be enough for hand washing purposes.

No

Notes

Are the toilet cisterns operating effectively?

Yes

Make sure cisterns aren't leaking. If your toilets don't have dual-flush mechanisms, consider fitting them.

No

If you have them, signs can help to remind people to use the small flush.

If you don't have dual flush cisterns and can't fit them, a save a flush bag popped in the cistern will reduce the standard flush volume.

**Updating the flush mechanism to an air gap flush, which waits until the cistern is empty before starting the refill, makes a difference too.**

Notes

**Are the urinals fitted with water efficient controls?**

- Yes**  Urinals which constantly leak or flush too often can waste a huge volume of water. Check for unwanted leaks or over-regular flushing, and ensure that the latest control mechanisms are fitted. Fitting waterless urinals is a really great way to cut down on water use.
- No**

Notes

**Are your showers operating efficiently?**

Many office business and organisations having showering facilities staff, customers or members and they're a common culprit of wasted water.

- Yes**  **Check for leaking or dripping shower units.**
- No**  Installing push-button timer controls and low-flow heads will help to reduce the amount of water used. Shower timers and signs asking people to keep time spent in the shower to a minimum are lower cost options.

Notes

**Is any equipment you use that takes water leaking or using more water than needed?**

- Yes**  Are fittings to the water supply secure and leak free, does any equipment need servicing or upgrading?
- No**

Notes

## 5. Consider how your business uses water

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

- Yes**  Are there best-practices you can apply to your business processes to reduce the water you use? It might be worth researching water efficiency in your industry to see what best practice advice or equipment you can adopt.
- No**

Notes

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

Yes

Are all the ways you're using water, from core processes, to wider building and ground maintenance essential? If you stopped, reduced or changed any water using process would it cause any issues or adversely affect what you do?

No

Notes

Do you maintain grounds and outdoor spaces?

Yes

Maintaining outside spaces can lead to excessive water use, especially in the summer

No

If you have lawns, only water them when essential. Watering lawns less often helps to grass putdown deeper roots, so need less watering.

Fit trigger nozzles to hoses to prevent accidental leakages. When landscaping, use existing plants and native species, which need less water.

Notes

Could you recycle water?

Yes

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

No

You can recycle greywater, (wastewater from washroom basins and showers) for flushing toilets or watering grounds and gardens.

Notes

## Next steps

Getting everyone's buy-in in your organisation is important for a successful water efficiency programme. Make sure they know about your water use, where its being wasted and the cost to the business. Ask for their opinion and ideas for making water savings.

Your water audit hopefully gives you some quick wins to improve water efficiency and identifies opportunities that might take more time and investment.

When you've had some measures in place for a few months, review your consumption to check on the impact it's had. You should have good news to share with others to encourage more water efficiency.

