

In the City of London, potable water and wastewater services are supplied by Thames Water.

## Water Efficiency

Reducing potable water consumption can reduce the operating costs for many businesses, while helping to meet the challenges of climate change, protecting the environment and reducing the impact of future water scarcity. The water industry is the UK's fourth-most energy-intensive sector. It consumes 3% of the UK's electricity and generates 1% of greenhouse gas emissions ([Water 2027 Report and What It Means For You | Veolia UK](#)). Hence reducing water consumption can make a significant contribution towards achieving net-zero emissions.

The [Waterwise](#) website explains how businesses can reduce their water consumption. It provides a comprehensive list of the many and varied ways in which businesses and charities, including Livery Companies and their suppliers, can reduce either the volume and/or the embedded energy of the water they consume. These options include tips on saving water in food preparation and catering, in washrooms and toilets, and in gardens and other outside planted areas.

An essential first step all organisations can take is to develop greater understanding of their current water usage. Thames Water provides [a Water Saving Calculator](#) suitable for businesses and Livery halls. The tool helps:

- i) identify how much water is being used for various functions by a business;
- ii) support comparison with actual total metered use;
- iii) identify discrepancies between expected and actual (metered) use;
- iv) support diagnosis of the likely causes of discrepancies (such as leaking toilets or pipework);
- v) identify opportunities for reduced consumption;
- vi) calculate the carbon footprint of a business's water consumption and the carbon savings associated with reduced consumption.

Thames Water also offers Free [Smarter Business Visits](#) to help the businesses they serve "get smarter with their water". Livery halls and City businesses can book a free visit by emailing: [london.sbv@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:london.sbv@groundwork.org.uk) or calling 020 3638 4321. A Thames Water appointed expert will review your business's bathroom and kitchen facilities. They will make recommendations and be able to fit water devices suitable for your premises. The visit and any devices they fit are free of charge and will help save water and money from your bills.

## Leaking Toilets

A [webinar by Andrew Tucker](#), Demand Reduction Strategy Manager, Thames Water showed that in 7,500 Smarter Business Visits, 29% of businesses had a leaking toilet. On average a leaking toilet wastes between 215 to 400 litres per day. Fixing such leaks was responsible for 51% of the water savings made from Smarter Business Visits. Over 95% of the leaky loo problems have been found on push-button, dual-flush toilets, with water leaking into the pan. [Click here](#) for water-saving tips when installing dual flush toilets.

## Tap Water Versus Bottled Water

The Livery Climate Action Group recommends that City businesses promote the consumption of tap water rather than bottled water at their premises and that all Livery Companies supply tap water in preference to bottled water at City functions.

Section 1.1 of the [Water UK Net Zero 2030 Routemap](#) indicates bottled water is around 900 times more carbon intensive than tap water per litre. Hence the water sector is leading a national shift towards refilling water bottles through the [Refill campaign](#).

In 2019 the City of London Corporation installed a network of 17 on-street water-refill points in the City, in a bid to eliminate the use of disposable plastic water bottles. Over 200 of the City's pubs, bars, cafes and restaurants have also become part of a network of water-bottle refill stations, where the public can refill reusable water bottles.

## Wastewater Efficiency

Wet wipes flushed down toilets mixed with cooking oil and fat are the major cause of sewer blockages, often resulting in massive fatbergs that can cause sewage flooding of homes and other properties. The removal of the blockages and the clean-ups that follow also add to greenhouse gas emissions. [See here](#).

Remember the three Ps: pee, poo and (toilet) paper – nothing else should be flushed!

- Wrap sanitary items, nappies, wipes and condoms in toilet paper and put them in the bin.
- Leave leftover cooking oil, fat and food to cool and put it in the bin.
- Take chemicals, solvents, engine oil and paint to your local refuse or recycling site.
- Take medicines, tablets, syringes and needles to your pharmacist, hospital or health authority for safe disposal

## Achieving Net Zero in the UK Water Industry

The water industry was the first sector in the UK to commit to net-zero emissions by 2030. In November 2020, water companies unveiled a ground-breaking plan to deliver a net-zero water supply for customers by 2030 in the world's first sector-wide commitment of its kind ([Water UK – Net Zero 2030 Routemap](#)). This could prevent the emission of 10 million tonnes of greenhouse gases by reaching net zero two decades ahead of the UK Government's legally binding target of 2050.

Fact checked by

