

Trainer Guide – Water Toolbox Talk

Purpose of the Video

The purpose of the Water toolbox talk is to provide your staff and colleagues with a short, easy to understand resource for people working in the construction sector on water. It serves two main purposes:

- **To introduce water as a sustainability issue to a construction audience;**
- **To educate construction workers on the benefits of being more efficient with their water use (It's not just about bills!); and**
- **To get operatives thinking about how they might be able to reduce water use on site.**

Introducing the Video

The video has been designed as a stand-alone resource which can be either viewed by operatives during a break, or in a more formalised classroom setting if desired. It should take around 20 minutes to view the module and then have a group discussion around the key points it raises.

If you are using the toolbox talk in a classroom setting, then it may be beneficial to get the group to consider the following questions:

- **What are the key water use hotspots in their day to day work;**
- **What can they do now to reduce water consumption; and**
- **What are some of the barriers to making further improvements, and how might these be overcome?**

Key Messages

Once the video has been viewed use discussion and response to take the group through the following key messages.

Key Message 1: *what are the key benefits of reducing water consumption.* The module introduces some of the key benefits associated with reducing water consumption aside from simply saving money on utility bills, such as reducing liquid effluents (which you subsequently need to be dealt with) and reducing environmental impacts.

Fundamentally reducing water consumption improves the efficiency of your business and can lead to knock on positive impacts for your business, which could lead to you saving money (such as a reduced requirement to deal with liquid effluents) and/or creating positive outcomes for your clients.

Key Message 2: *introduces the concept of “reducing, reusing and recycling” water.*

Commonly we use potable water straight from the tap for everything, from drinking to cleaning and toilet flushing. However, this grade of water is not necessary for many of the things we end up using it for – for example, rainwater is perfectly suitable for flushing toilets or vehicle washing.

Key Message 3: *introduces the concept of a water hierarchy, reducing your use of water, re-using water and if possible/appropriate recycling it.*

The module also introduces the concept of a water hierarchy which has been designed to give on site workers a frame of reference for thinking about reducing water consumption. The purpose of the hierarchy is also to help decisions makers formulate better strategies for reducing water consumption.

Next Steps...

Once the toolbox talk has been completed the viewers should understand what the key issues associated with water consumption are, and most importantly what the key benefits of being more efficient with water use are. The key action following the toolbox talk will be for learners to go back to their workplace and think about how water consumption might be reduced.

Frequently Asked Questions

During the discussions you might expect questions such as the following

- **Q:** *How can I save water in my day job?*

A: *There will be many ways that you can save water in your day to day work and often many of these solutions will be simple things. Concepts that the toolbox talk introduces, such as the water hierarchy and thinking about how you might be able to re-use or even recycle water have been designed to help you think about some things you might be able to do.*

- **Q:** *Purchasing new, water efficient, equipment is expensive.*

A: *Buying new machinery is only one thing you can do to reduce water consumption on site and there are many things you can do to make the equipment you have more efficient. This could be as simple as fitting “hippo” water savers into toilet cisterns (around £2.00 each!). In addition, technologies such as waterless wheel washing systems can be a great solution for vehicle wheel washing on construction sites when temporary solutions are required.*

However, when equipment does need replacement it may be highly beneficial to think about replacement with alternatives that are the most water efficient.

- **Q:** *Why is it better to use rain-water instead of tap-water for some purposes?*

A: *You might not think it but the water in your tap has been highly processed to make sure that it is safe enough for you to drink. These processes do have an environmental impact (for example, in the UK it is estimated that the water industry consumes around 2-3% of the energy generated) and by using secondary sources such as rain-water we can reduce these impacts.*

In addition, by its very nature rainwater is ‘soft’ water, meaning that it has very low concentrations of minerals in it. This lack of minerals means that you can get a better lather and use less soap!