

Improving your Resource Efficiency

Starting on your environmental journey

There are many ways your business can start to benefit from resource efficiency with little or no capital investment.

Managing your energy, water and material resources more efficiently can help you to cut costs, increase profitability and become more competitive. It will also boost your reputation.

In the face of rising material and energy costs, improving your environmental performance can have a significant impact on your ability to secure and retain contracts and customers.

Here you will find some initial advice, ideas and links to inspire you as you embark on your sustainability journey.

ENERGY

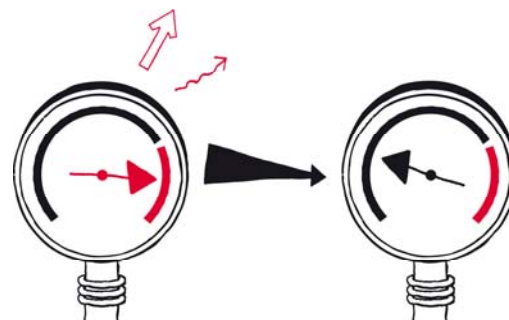
Making your business more energy-efficient is often the easiest way to reduce operational costs because even minor adjustments can bring significant annual savings.

Heating and hot water

The energy used to provide heating and hot water for your site can amount to more than 50% of your business's energy consumption and carbon emissions.

Taking regular meter readings will help you to understand how much energy your business consumes. A regular walk-around can help to highlight areas where 'quick win' savings can be made. Ideas to consider include:

- Draught-proof and insulate your roof, windows and doors to reduce heat loss.
- Set the boiler's timer controls so that heating is only on when people are in.
- Turn down the heating. A reduction of just 1°C on the thermostat could cut your annual heating bills by up to 8%.
- Set your heating system to 'frost protection' at weekends and during closure periods, to avoid burst pipes.
- Leave plenty of space around your radiators so that hot air can circulate effectively.
- Localise heating to the areas where it is actually needed.
- Insulate all the components of your heating systems.
- Service your boiler regularly to make sure it is working at its optimum efficiency.



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To find out about free resource efficiency support available to businesses in your local area, through the ENWORKS programme, visit: www.getsupport.enworks.com

Or contact us on: 0161 237 4181 or info@enworks.com

Lighting

Lighting accounts for up to 20% of a typical business's electricity consumption but it is also one of the easiest and cheapest areas to address.

- Use low-energy light bulbs, which typically use up to 80% less energy than a standard bulb, last 10 times longer and deliver a return on investment within just one year.
- Fit motion sensors or timer switches in rooms that are used less frequently, so that lights are only used when needed.
- Make sure all lights are switched off at the end of the day, except for emergency lighting.
- Label banks of lights so that staff can clearly see which switches control which lights.
- Keep sky-lights and windows clear to maximise natural light and reduce the need for artificial lighting.
- Avoid lighting any unused areas unnecessarily by removing bulbs that are surplus to requirements.

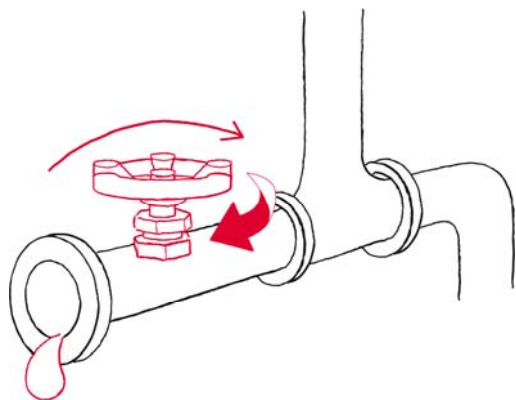
FUEL

Most businesses spend far more than they need to on fuel and transport, and as fuel prices continue to rise the pressure to make improvements is growing all the time.

By addressing fuel use in your business you can significantly reduce your fuel bills, cut your carbon emissions, reduce wear and tear to your vehicles, and improve driver safety at the same time. Depending on the size and location of your fleet, fuel efficiency measures could save you as much as £1,000 per vehicle.

Here are some simple changes you can make to the way you manage fuel and transport in your business, to help improve fuel efficiency and cut costs:

- Ensure that tyre pressures are maintained at the correct level to maximise fuel efficiency.
- Minimise mileage by combining loads and finding the shortest routes.
- Avoid carrying unnecessary weight as heavy loads put more strain on a vehicle.
- Keep your speed down to save fuel and check your vehicle manufacturer's guide to find the most fuel-efficient speeds for town and motorway driving.
- Drive smoothly, by avoiding sudden braking or accelerating, and reduce your speed to save fuel.
- Keep air conditioning to a minimum as it increases fuel consumption.
- Close windows and sun-roofs to reduce drag, which reduces your fuel efficiency.
- Challenge staff to drive more efficiently by creating a miles per gallon 'leaderboard'.
- Consider homeworking or video-conferencing to reduce the need for business travel.
- Encourage the use of public transport or car sharing by staff, to minimise your carbon emissions from travel.



WATER

In many businesses water is taken for granted, but the cost of using clean water and disposing of waste water is rising.

Taking a systematic approach can help you to reduce your business's water consumption by up to 30% and reduce your annual water and wastewater costs.

If your business uses large amounts of water then water efficiency will also help you to address the risks associated with periods of water shortage.

Water rates

Almost all businesses pay water rates for any water they use as part of their commercial activities, as well as separate fees for sewerage services. If your business produces any effluent (liquid waste) you will also be required to pay extra for the costs of collecting, treating and disposing of it.

The Ofwat website (www.ofwat.gov.uk) has guidance on whether your business is eligible to choose its own water supplier, to make sure you get the best rates and service. You can use the same site to check if you qualify for a discounted, large-user tariff.

By reviewing your water consumption and reducing the amount you use, you can cut your water, sewerage and effluent bills overnight and reduce the impact that your business has on the environment.

Here are some top tips on improving your water efficiency:

- Encourage staff and customers to minimise water usage and to turn off taps whenever they are not in use.
- Fit water-minimising controls to your water sources, such as push-taps, toilet cistern bags, or flow regulators or restrictors. The payback period for installing flush controls on urinals, for example, will usually be as little as five weeks.
- Look out for any drips and leaks and fix them as quickly as possible to avoid waste.
- Find out where your supply pipes run and where their shut-off valves are, in case you need to switch off the water in the event of a burst pipe or leak.
- Use a water butt or suitable container to harvest rainwater for re-use on site.
- Check that your water meter serial number matches the number on your bills, so that you are only being billed for your own water consumption.

MATERIALS

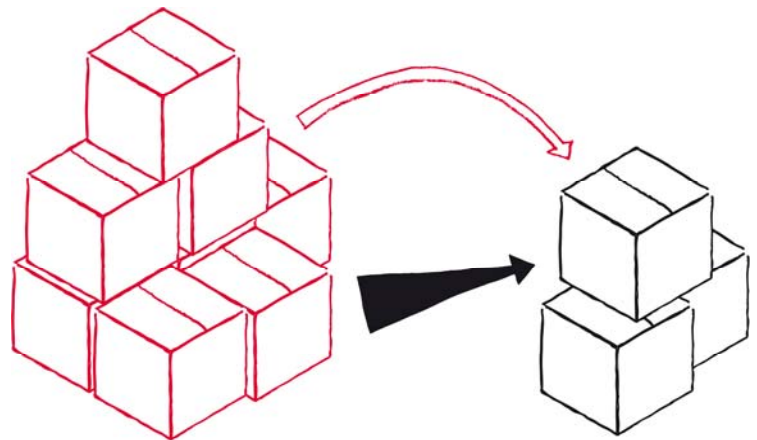
The purchase of solid, liquid and gaseous raw materials can be one of the most expensive inputs for any business but managing them more efficiently will help you to lower the costs.

Using materials efficiently is all about making more with less, which can have a direct and lasting impact on your business's bottom line and reduce its environmental impact at the same time.

It will also help you to minimise waste, and hence save on waste-related costs, and to improve productivity and performance.

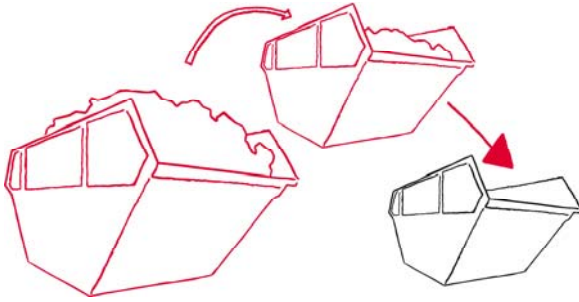
Here are some straightforward ideas for improving material efficiency:

- Use materials sparingly, for example by minimising the amount you print, using double-sided printing, re-using envelopes and folders, minimising the amount of cleaning products you use, and re-using packaging or containers on site.
- Negotiate bespoke specifications with your suppliers - for example, by asking them to adjust the size and dimensions of a material to avoid off-cuts and unnecessary waste.
- Review the amount of materials you use and only purchase what you actually need.
- Repair broken goods where possible rather than purchasing replacements.
- Source materials locally, to minimise the environmental impact of long-distance transportation.



WASTE

All businesses, regardless of size or sector, generate, store, handle and dispose of waste materials. The cost of waste in UK companies is typically 4% of annual turnover, and in many companies it is as high as 10%.



With annual rises in landfill tax and a growing number of legal obligations in relation to waste management, waste is of increasing concern to many businesses.

By monitoring the amount and types of waste your business produces, and finding ways to prevent or minimise waste production in the first place and then manage any left-over waste, you can reduce your costs significantly.

A regular walk-around of your facilities is often the best starting point for tackling waste, because it helps you to see first-hand where waste is being generated. The most effective way to reduce the associated waste costs is to follow the Waste Hierarchy approach below. The higher up the hierarchy you act, the greater the impact your actions will have:

Reduce

- Identify key sources of waste so that you can find ways of tackling it at source.
- Review procurement so that you only order what you need.
- Consider whether all the packaging and materials you use are necessary.
- Identify leaks or spillages and make changes to avoid them in future.

Re-use

- Collect used paper and use the blank sides for printing.
- Re-fill used toner and ink cartridges for re-use.
- Re-use scrap materials for repairs or odd jobs on site.
- Find new uses for returnable packaging or re-usable components.

Recycle

- Contact a waste brokerage service to see if your waste could be used by another company.
- Segregate different types of waste into separate containers so it can be collected for recycling.

Recover

- Find out if your waste could be used locally as a fuel for renewable energy generation.
- Install a biomass and Combined Heat and Power boiler on site, to generate energy from waste.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

National sources of information and advice for businesses seeking to improve environmental performance can be found online at:

Business Link: www.businesslink.gov.uk
Carbon Trust: www.carbontrust.co.uk
Environment Agency: www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Defra: www.defra.gov.uk
WRAP: www.wrap.org.uk

For information on the full range of business support available to your business visit Business Link:

www.businesslink.gov.uk

Or call: 0845 600 9006

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