



WHA
Water Dispenser &
Hydration Association
QUALITY • TRUST • STANDARDS

Water Matters

Why Water Matters for construction workers



Why is hydration important for construction workers?

Managers in charge of construction sites should be aware that, by law, employers must provide access to water in the workplace. Scientists say that a loss of 1% of body mass due to dehydration can impair performance. According to research, even a small fall in hydration levels may mean a drop in concentration, which can lead to mistakes. Construction workers are one of the at-risk groups due to the manual nature of the job and the frequent need for outdoor working. When access to potable mains water may be limited, a bottled water cooler is a must. Without it, your site could be forced to close down.

Why are building workers at risk from dehydration?

Studies say that even modest heat (16°C/60°F) increases heart strain and makes it essential to sustain blood flow to the active muscles, the skin and the brain. Construction workers wearing hot, protective clothing are particularly vulnerable to dehydration. Dehydration has been shown to reduce physical work capacity and lower heat tolerance.

What are the dangers of dehydration?

Even low levels of dehydration can create headaches, lethargy, or just an overall lack of alertness. In the long term it can cause problems with the renal system and mental functioning as well as the cardio-vascular system. Concentration lapses that may lead to simple but harmless errors in, say, an office environment, can lead to mistakes that are far more serious on a construction site. Water is a good choice for rehydration as it is calorie free, does not contain caffeine and is good for dental health too.

What's the best means of providing on-site hydration?

Water coolers are safe, hygienic, cost-effective and convenient. Ensure that you have a cooler supplied by an accredited Water Dispenser & Hydration Association (WHA) member. Members of WHA are all subject to the WHA annual audit which is a rigorous safety inspection. Some water cooler providers can supply both 110 volt coolers and 240 volt coolers. All equipment is PAT tested prior to delivery, so you can be reassured of compliance. Some members are able to install equipment at short notice and are willing to fulfil short term hire requests, so your on-site hydration needs can be met easily.

“ Construction workers wearing hot, protective clothing are particularly vulnerable to dehydration. ”

“ Drink frequently, especially during hot weather. ”



Guiding colleagues' hydration on site?

- Advise colleagues not to wait until they feel thirsty before taking a drink, as by then they may already be dehydrated. They should drink frequently, especially during hot weather.
- If staff drive or operate machinery in the course of their work make sure they don't drink whilst at the wheel. Advise them to have enough water prior to a shift to keep the brain active and alert. Encourage them to take water breaks in hot weather.
- If using bottled water coolers, store the bottles in a cool, dry and clean place.

Not all water coolers are equal

Whichever style of water cooler you choose, make sure of one thing. Choose a supplier that is a member of the Water Dispenser & Hydration Association. Known as the WHA, the Association is the leading trade body ensuring standards of safety and hygiene that are at the top of their class. WHA members must stick to strict Codes of Practice and good conduct and are rigorously audited every year. By dealing with a WHA member you know you are getting the best. Visit <https://twha.co.uk/find-a-member> to check who to do business with.

The sustainable choice

Bottled water coolers are highly sustainable: bottles are collected, cleansed and reused many times over whilst main-fed coolers of course use water from the mains. In addition, many WHA members follow the '5 for 5 Sustainability Pledge'. For details visit our website.

Further information

For more information visit www.twha.co.uk

Healthy Hydration Chart

There's one easy way to know if you are properly hydrated – check the colour of your urine against our 'pee chart'. Pale is good; dark urine means you could be in need of fluid. And if you find you are dehydrated, here's an easy way to rehydrate healthily: head straight to that water cooler... simple.

well hydrated

Your urine is an ideal, pale straw colour. Keep up the good work.

You're okay but you could do with a small glass of water now.

You may be a little dehydrated. Drink a couple of glasses of water now.

You need to drink about up to half litre of water right now.

Not good! You are dehydrated and may have a headache. Drink a litre of water.

poorly hydrated

Note: if your urine is even darker than this and or red/dark brown then dehydration may not be the problem. Seek medical advice.



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Disclaimer: the information given here is for guidance only. If in doubt about your health seek attention from a medical professional.