



## Why Water Matters for public sector workers



“ Keeping  
workforces hydrated  
is important. ”

### Why is hydration important?

Public sector managers need to be aware of three things:

- By law, employers must provide access to water in the workplace.
- Scientists say there is little doubt that dehydration can affect performance. Even a loss of just 1% of body mass can have an impact of mental and physical performance.
- If access to potable mains water is limited, a bottled water cooler may be the best bet.

### Won't any fluid do?

There's nothing wrong with the occasional cup of coffee or the odd soft drink but employers have a duty of care to encourage healthy hydration. Water is kind to teeth and calorie free so helps promote good health and fight obesity.

### What exactly does the law require?

Keeping workforces hydrated is important. The Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992 state that an 'adequate supply of wholesome drinking water' must be provided, and that it be readily available at suitable and clearly marked places. <https://worksmart.org.uk/health-advice/where-you-work/toilets-and-washrooms/does-my-employer-have-provide-drinking-water>

### What are the dangers of dehydration?

Even small levels of dehydration can create headaches, lethargy, or just an overall lack of alertness. In the long term, it can create problems with the renal system and mental functioning as well as the cardio-vascular and digestive systems.

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

Water coolers can provide water safely, hygienically, cost-effectively and conveniently. Ensure that you have a cooler supplied by an accredited WHA member, as they must undergo rigorous annual safety inspections. Some water cooler providers can supply both 110 volt coolers and 240 volt coolers. All equipment is PAT tested prior to delivery.

### Do buildings open to the public need to supply free water?

No, but for local authorities and other public sector organisations whose premises are open to the public (such as swimming pools, health centres, hospitals or gyms) water coolers can also provide a valuable public service by promoting the healthy option of drinking water, leading the way in good health.

“ Encourage water breaks in hot weather. ”



## What is the best way to provide safe hydration?

Advise colleagues not to wait until they feel thirsty before taking a drink, as by then they may already be dehydrated. Drink frequently especially during hot weather.

- If your staff members drive or operate machinery in the course of their work, make sure they hydrate before they work.
- Encourage water breaks in hot weather.
- Ensure that if using bottled water coolers, the bottles are stored in a cool, dry and clean place.
- Use an accredited water distributor (see below).

## 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](http://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.



Water Dispenser &  
Hydration Association

QUALITY • TRUST • STANDARDS

Choose a WHA member –  
for hydration you can trust  
[www.twha.co.uk](http://www.twha.co.uk)

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