



PRESS RELEASE
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New Action Plan Will Reduce Excessive Water Use In Construction

The Strategic Forum for Construction's water group is today publishing its *Action plan for reducing water usage on construction sites*. The plan will come as good news for the building industry, offering advice on how best to cut the overuse of water in construction and so help industry in its ambition to reduce the consumption of water by 20 per cent by 2012, against 2008 levels.

The action plan is based on three principal ideas: **value for money**, **the work environment**, and **habit**. By examining the areas where most water is used on construction sites, and taking into account all aspects of activity on site, from personnel to trades, the plan lays out a variety of simple to adopt and cost effective ways to check the use of water. Such methods offer a range of techniques to tackle the use of large volumes of water, for example:

- fitting sensor-activated or auto shut-off taps;
- fitting triggers to hoses;
- making far greater use of closed-loop water recycling for tasks like hydro-demolition; and
- the early placement of temporary settlement lagoons to capture rainwater.

Chairman of the Strategic Forum water group Jonathan Garrett said: "After the driest spring on record it is only right that the construction industry should play our part in helping to save water.

"However this group has also been rooted very firmly in business reality. The changes outlined in this plan can make a big difference to water usage, with minimal impact on the bottom lines of firms already enduring tough economic times.

"Furthermore, by implementing even just a few of the recommendations included in the action plan contractors can dramatically cut the quantities of water they use on site, particularly when addressing high use activities such as dust suppression and cleaning."

Jane Thornback, coordinator of the Strategic Forum's Sustainable Construction task group, commented: "The publication of this water action plan is another sign of how seriously the construction industry takes its environmental responsibilities.

"This plan is the latest in a programme aimed at making construction a more sustainable industry. We firmly believe that by working with industry towards a

shared target, we can outline wasteful practices on site, and achieve the often small scale changes that can make a big difference to our collective environmental impact.

“We look forward to helping industry cut its water consumption by a fifth by 2012.”

The water group includes principal contractors and has benefitted from technical input by WRc with support and funding from WRAP as part of their programme to support the construction industry in delivering improvements in resource efficiency (materials use, waste prevention, reduction in carbon and water impacts).

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Notes to Editors:

1) The Strategic Forum for Construction is the only construction forum that seeks to represent the whole of the construction community. It comprises senior members of the constituent organisations. The Forum's activities are both proactive and reactive but at all times seek to work in partnership across the industry to achieve long term improvements. The membership of the Strategic Forum comprises: Membership comprises:

- Construction Clients Group
- Contractors Groups
- Construction Industry Council (currently the host secretariat for the Forum)
- Construction Products Association
- National Specialist Contractors' Council
- Specialist Engineering Contractors Group
- Trades Union Council.

The Forum has a number of Task Groups including the Sustainable Construction Task Group through whose auspices the work on the water target came about. Similar groups exist for waste and carbon targets.

2) The Strategic Forum Water Sub-group is chaired by Jonathan Garrett of Balfour Beatty on behalf of the UK Contractors Group. The Water Sub-group secretariat is provided by WRc and funding for various stages of the project was supported by contributions from BIS, Defra and WRAP.

3) WRAP works with businesses and individuals to help them reap the benefits of reducing waste, develop sustainable products and use resources in an efficient way. Established as a not-for-profit company in 2000, WRAP is backed by government funding from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. More information on all of WRAP's programmes can be found on www.wrap.org.uk

4) The *Action Plan for reducing water usage on construction sites* is available from <http://www.strategicforum.org.uk/Sustain.shtml> or <http://www.constructionproducts.org.uk>

5) **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**

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