



The WBCSD Pledge for Access to Safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene at the Workplace

Overview of
guiding
principles for
implementation



wbcds water





Investment in WASH at work ...

Action2020 is a business sustainability agenda towards 2020 and beyond, led by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), with water as one of the identified priority areas for urgent action at scale.

As a direct contribution to accelerate solutions to the global challenge of access to safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), the WBCSD is calling for the business community **to sign and implement the Pledge for Access to Safe WASH at the Workplace.**



By signing the Pledge companies commit to implementing access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene at the workplace at an appropriate level of standard for all employees under direct control within 3 years.

... is an investment in business

It is estimated that more than **1.8 billion** people are still without access to safe drinking water and more than **4 billion** lack access to adequate sanitation.² Moreover, the simple act of washing hands with soap can cut the risk of diarrhea by approximately **40 percent**.³

Many businesses have operations, employees, contractors and customers in countries lacking access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene. Their economic, social and environmental impacts can cause illness or fatalities, impair productivity, and restrict markets for some products and services. There is a compelling and clear economic case for businesses to demonstrate leadership by addressing this situation.



Investing in safe WASH for employees leads to:

A healthier and more productive workforce:

Adequate access to safe WASH is associated with decreased absenteeism due to water-related diseases, and thus improved productivity.



Increased brand value: Provision of access to safe WASH to all employees can also lead to tangible benefits such as improved public perception, and thus increased brand value.



Lower reputational risks and more secured social license to operate: Perceived mismanagement of water resources or infringement on the Human Right to Water and Sanitation can negatively impact businesses and possibly result in revoking the company's social license to operate within certain communities. Good water management and provision of safe WASH allows them to lower this risk.



Expanded and more vibrant markets: Countries with higher percentages of the population with access to safe WASH enjoy higher growth. It is estimated that for every US\$ 1 invested in water and sanitation, US\$ 4.30 is generated in economic returns through increased productivity.



Demonstration of leadership in supporting global objectives: Ensuring safe WASH at the workplace contributes to the achievement of internationally recognized objectives such as the universal realization of the Human Right to Water and Sanitation.



Straightforward and easy implementation

Signature: Any person in a position to commit the company can sign by sending a written statement in an email. For more information visit www.wbcds.org/washatworkplace.aspx.



Implementation steps



Support materials for implementation:

A Self-Assessment Tool and Guiding Principles for implementation, including points of reference for good practices, have been developed by the WBCSD to support companies in operationalizing the Pledge. They can be downloaded from:

www.wbcsd.org/washatworkplace.aspx and will be updated to reflect lessons from implementation experience.



A non-legally binding commitment tailored to each company:

The implementation of the Pledge aims to be integrated in existing company processes rather than responding to an externally imposed requirement. For example, WASH provisions can be integrated into existing HSE procedures / auditing systems and pilot tested in one or two locations before company-wide scaling-up.



Reporting and experience-sharing: There are no formal reporting requirements but companies are encouraged to communicate externally about the Pledge, while sharing their implementation experiences and feedback with the WBCSD. Case studies and interviews of signatories will be published on the Pledge webpage:

www.wbcsd.org/washatworkplace.aspx.



Extending impact: Forward-looking businesses are encouraged to move from implementation at a company's own premises to promotion across value chains (including supply chains, employees' homes and communities).



Self-assessment

Through a self-assessment the following points of reference for leading practice in providing appropriate access to safe WASH at a given workplace could be evaluated and gaps prioritized:

General

- 🔥 Compliance with local and national laws and regulations
- 🔥 Availability of provisions for temporary and mobile worksites
- 🔥 Availability of WASH installations, policies and procedures for shared facilities

The simple act of washing hands with soap can cut the risk of diarrhea by **40 percent**, and therefore reduce the rate of absenteeism at the workplace.⁴

Estimates suggest that **94 million** work days are missed annually by working women in India, due to inadequate sanitation at the workplace (especially due to lack of menstrual hygiene management).⁵





Water

1. Drinking water

- 🔥 Availability of sufficient, safe, acceptable and physically accessible drinking water
- 🔥 Regular cleaning, recharging, and disinfection of drinking water stations (disinfection minimum once every 2 months)
- 🔥 Regular drinking water testing

2. Water supply and water drainage systems

- 🔥 Minimum water supply improvements (e.g., better access, protected water sources, and if necessary, water disinfection at point of use)
- 🔥 Availability of adequate water drainage and disposal systems
- 🔥 Regular cleaning of all water supply systems (minimum 2 to 4 times per year)
- 🔥 Regular inspection / maintenance and repair of water supply and drainage facilities (inspection at least annually / maintenance and repairs at least annually and whenever changes to water flow or quality are detected)

3. Other water uses / water resource

- 🔥 Accessibility of water for washing, and where necessary, for showering and personal hygiene in all toilets and washroom areas
- 🔥 Use of water-saving technologies and implementation of water-saving awareness campaigns in priority areas facing water scarcity or water stress



Sanitation

1. Toilet / urinal design and provision

- Available number of toilets (minimum 2 seats + 2 urinals per 45 males and 3 toilet seats per 50 females)
- Safety (collection and disposal of urine and excrement safe for both health and the environment)
- Availability and status of lighting and ventilation (permanent lighting fixtures and mechanical or natural ventilation)
- Adequate toilet design (taking into account local customs, religious and social traditions, and specific gender needs)
- Suitable accommodations for elderly and disabled persons
- Availability of sanitary product / medical waste disposal (e.g., specific waste containers for feminine care products / special bags for bodily secretions and sharps containers with medical waste warning labels on them)

2. Toilet / urinal cleaning, maintenance and improvements

- Regular cleaning (minimum once per day) + periodic “extensive cleaning” and disinfection of all sanitary installations and washrooms (minimum once per week)
- Maintenance (toilet facilities inspected at least monthly / maintenance and repairs more frequently if issues are reported by employees)
- Minimum sanitation improvements (e.g., flush or pour-flush, septic tank, pit latrine, ventilated improved pit-latrine, etc.)



Hygiene

1. Hygiene equipment

- Personal hygiene provisions (e.g., soap, mechanisms for hand and face drying, and water at a standard acceptable for cleansing hands)
- Shower and bathing facilities where the nature of the work necessitates showering before leaving the workplace (1 shower per 10 employees of each gender required to shower during the same shift)
- Storage of cleaning equipment in appropriate conditions and in dedicated locations
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for all those involved in the cleaning and maintenance of toilet washrooms and associated facilities (e.g., gloves and non-slip rubber soled shoes)

2. Behavioral issues

- Signage for appropriate hand washing behavior, including critical times (e.g., before food preparation, eating, after using toilets, etc.) and techniques (i.e., use of water and soap / ash, washing both hands, rubbing hands together at least 3 times, and drying hands hygienically)
- Hygiene training and awareness building (including provision of annual refresher courses)
- Sanitation and hygiene promotion material (e.g., posters and education campaigns)
- Training for cleaning and maintenance staff in proper cleaning techniques / standards and the proper use of all cleaning materials

3. Water-related diseases

- Monitoring and reporting on water-related diseases in the workforce – where workplaces include food and beverage handling or medical staff employment

Example of poster which could be used to promote proper hand washing technique, e.g., during a hygiene education campaign



Wet hands with water



Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces



Rub hands palm to palm



Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa



Palm to palm with fingers interlaced



Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa



Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa



Rinse hands with water



Dry thoroughly with a single use towel



Use towel to turn off faucet



...and your hands are safe.

About the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), a CEO-led organization of some 200 forward-thinking global companies, is committed to galvanizing the global business community to create a sustainable future for business, society and the environment. Together with its members, the Council applies its respected thought leadership and effective advocacy to generate constructive solutions and take shared action. Leveraging its strong relationships with stakeholders as the leading advocate for business, the Council helps drive debate and policy change in favor of sustainable development solutions.

The WBCSD provides a forum for its member companies - who represent all business sectors, all continents and a combined revenue of more than \$8.5 trillion, 19 million employees - to share best practices on sustainable development issues and to develop innovative tools that change the status quo. The Council also benefits from a network of 70 national and regional business councils and partner organizations, a majority of which are based in developing countries.

www.wbcsd.org

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 - 2 - Baum, R., J. Luh, J. Bartram, "Sanitation: a global estimate of sewerage connections without treatment and the resulting impact on MDG progress," Environmental Science and Technology, January 2013
 - 3 - Fewtrell et al., 2005, quoted at <http://globalhandwashing.org/why/health-impact#sthash.ffkYc3T8.dpuf>
 - 4 - Fewtrell et al., 2005 – quoted from <http://globalhandwashing.org>
 - 5 - Kumar, A.C. et al., "Economic Impacts of Inadequate Sanitation in India", WSP, Geneva, Switzerland, 2011

"We already commit to providing access to clean water to our employees at all of our direct operations, as part of our existing commitment on water stewardship. By signing the WASH pledge, we are reaffirming this commitment and our recognition of our responsibilities as manufacturer and employer. We hope that together with the other companies that have already signed up, we can encourage more businesses to do the same."

Carlo Galli, Technical Manager
for Water Resources,
Nestlé

www.wbcsd.org

To join the Pledge signatories, download its supporting documents, and read about implementation experiences, visit www.wbcsd.org/washatworkplace.aspx



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