

WASH Pledge

Frequently Asked Questions

What is WASH?

WASH is an acronym that stands for “water, sanitation and hygiene”. Universal, affordable, and sustainable access to WASH is the focus of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Targets 6.1 and 6.2. Currently, 2.2 billion people around the world do not have access to safely managed drinking water services, 4.2 billion people do not have safely managed sanitation services, and 3 billion lack basic handwashing facilities.

WASH is a public health issue, what can business do?

WASH is an issue for all, it is a public health, human rights and economic development issue. Ensuring adequate and safe WASH requires collaboration between private, public and civil society organizations. Specifically, for business, investing in WASH can help expand markets, contribute to prosperous societies, and build a resilient workforce.

What is the WASH Pledge?

By signing the WASH Pledge, companies commit to implementing access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene at the workplace at an appropriate level of standard for all employees in all premises under their control within three years of signature. The WASH Pledge was launched in 2013, and to date, over 50 companies have signed up.

Why should a company sign the WASH Pledge?

Companies commit to the WASH Pledge to improve health, safety and wellbeing and raise awareness among their employees, and to show leadership on this critical issue. Signing the WASH Pledge is a clear commitment to the UN SDG 6 and offers opportunities to collaborate with several of our partners such as [WASH4Work](#) and other Pledge signatories.

What's new with the WASH Pledge?

The Pledge assessment tool and guidance document have been comprehensively reviewed, with inputs from signatory companies and partners of the WASH4WORK initiative. The main outcome of this review is an extended scope: now including value chain and communities and a simplified assessment tool that also incorporates new definitions and practices that have emerged since the Pledge was launched.

What are the benefits to business in taking action on WASH?

[Business have reported a number of benefits](#), including decreased absenteeism due to improved employee health, increased productivity of employees due to improved access to safe drinking water and toilet facilities and improved community relations through joint initiatives. Ultimately, the main benefit is a clear corporate commitment to human rights and SDG6.

Is there a requirement to report on progress and submit documentation?

No, the WASH Pledge is a voluntary commitment. Signatories are encouraged to communicate their commitment, progress and outcomes (internally and externally), however, there is no requirement to submit reports to WBCSD.

Is the guidance relevant at times of a pandemic (e.g. COVID-19)?

Yes. Safe water supply, sanitation and hygiene facilities and practices are important in such times. The guidance is relevant for promoting good and safe practices at all times.

Do I have to be a WBCSD member to sign the pledge?

No, any company can sign the pledge.