



MONARCH WATER

EDITORIAL FEATURE

Hard water is a problem for many households and businesses in the UK. Monarch Water discusses the benefits to installers of introducing a water softener to their customers to provide an effective long term solution against limescale.

Nearly two thirds of the UK face the age old problem of hard water. The visible signs of hard water are scale, scum and tide marks around the bath and taps as well as those that you don't see within your hot water system and pipes.

Without intervention this will lead to a build-up of limescale which stays within the home's water system, coating the heat exchanger, making the system less energy efficient and potentially shortening its, and other appliances' working life. Incredibly, this problem costs the UK an estimated £1 billion every year through replacement, servicing and maintenance.

Eliminating the effects of hard water

A water softener is undeniably the best product to gain the full benefits of soft water and limescale protection as it physically removes existing and prevents new scale from forming.

Alternatives to water softeners include conditioners and certain limescale control devices (LCDs), such as electrolytic or magnetic devices. Whilst it is recognised there is a place in the marketplace for these, the fact they only offer a temporary relief to the effects of hard water, lasting only a few hours before reverting back to scale forming water, does not give the end user the 24/7 protection they desire. The introduction of a softener goes way past just limescale prevention. As a result customers will benefit from sparkling, streak free surfaces, softer laundry, smoother skin and reduced cleaning time to get the same results and at a lower cost. Softeners by using less than 50% soap, cleaning agents and detergents when compared to hard water, leave less detergent residue on clothes, and anecdotal evidence has shown that they also help with skin conditions such as eczema.

Meeting the water treatment needs of every house

Every hard water home in the UK regardless of the type of boiler it has installed can have a water softener. The industry agrees that as long as the primary side of the system is filled with hard water then there will be no issues at all. The HHIC along with leading boiler and chemical manufacturers all support this position. As a result, the net worth of installing a water softener will only continue to offer both a sustainable and profitable revenue source for installers.

British Water estimates that each year the average family home in a hard water area will use water containing 70kg of scale. Just 1.6mm of scale in a customer's heating system will cause a 12% loss in heat transfer. Just lowering the efficiency of a home's heating system will only increase the impact of price increases and repair costs on a household's financial budget.

Making the right product choice

Modern day softeners have been designed around the needs of the UK's kitchen and plumbing systems. In doing so, the modern water softener is compact, easier to install and to set up. Being straight forward to install, means that the average installation can be completed in under 3-4 hours.

More so than ever, they are also available for a widening range of supplies from 15, 22 and 28mm and in a range covering electric and non-electric models by manufacturers who recognise the need to offer more flexibility for installers to meet the varying supply needs of their customers. What is more being able to buy

from a merchant at a trade discount enables the installer to offer a competitive supply and install quote for their customer and still make a good profit.

Reassurance of reliability

The majority of modern softeners offer excellent reliability, lasting in some cases over 30 years. When recommending a softener installers should seek to refer manufacturers that provide service engineers to undertake 'at home' warranty support, if ever needed, as well as checking for the most extensive warranty coverage. Not only does this provide reassurance to the customer that they are getting a quality product with full 24/7 service support for the duration of its lifetime, it also allows the installer to simply fit and forget, leaving them to get on with other work.

Helping customers make the right choices

There are approximately over 13 million homes in hard water areas in the UK. Many of these households may not be aware of effective measures that can be taken against limescale and its effects. This need for advice and education presents the perfect opportunity for installers to remind their customers that if scale is not removed it will affect their heating system and appliances, proving in hindsight an unnecessary cost to rectify the problem.

With over 35 years' experience as a heating and plumbing engineer, Phil Bailey, known locally to his customers as the 'The Water Softener Chap, commented; *'It's not always as straight forward as saying that you need a water softener to a customer to prevent limescale damage. Sometimes you need to educate them about the benefits of soft water, so I regularly have conversations around the benefits of having a scum free bath or that they'll be able to cut back on the detergent for their washing machines. It's talking about the real benefits that help to sell the subject. But, to help make the point I always have handy an old scaled up copper pipe, it helps illustrate the real effects of scale on their pipes. They get the point then!'*

In providing timely and professional advice to help support and educate your customer, installers are sure to reap the long term benefits of satisfied customers. Whether it is through repeat business or being recommended for doing a good job, a happy customer is an invaluable way to build your business for future prosperity.