

Monarch Water's **Kevin Johnson** says installers can tap into new income by recommending water softeners to customers in hard water areas.

# IT'S A SOFT SELL



**A**lthough the bathroom is the one room in the house that uses more water than any other, very little thought, if any, is usually given to its quality. However, with bathrooms costing homeowners serious investment, it's important that installers help them protect their assets from the damage that hard water can cause in the form of limescale.

## Big issue

With 60% of people in the UK living in hard water areas and only 6-7% owning a water softener, there is huge profit potential for installers in this relatively untapped market. Therefore telling customers about the important role water softeners play in not only keeping water soft and preventing limescale, but protecting the heating elements in household appliances, will reap benefits.

Hard water is caused by minerals in the limestone and chalk beds it flows through before entering the mains water supply. The magnesium and calcium in these rocks cling to water, which then enters homes. However, it's only when the water is heated that these minerals turn to limescale.

Unfortunately, this means sparkling new bathrooms won't stay in showroom condition for very long, unless the water is softened, and limescale will soon start to dull taps and leave scummy residue on shower screens, toilet bowls and basins.

Although scale and scum in bathrooms is unsightly and difficult to remove, it's the

limescale that's hidden in pipes and coating heating elements that causes the most costly damage to people's homes.

It's not just the bathroom that will experience the negative effects of limescale either. The builds up will damage heating elements in boilers, showers, dishwashers, washing machines, coffee machines and kettles, making them work harder and cost more to run.

In fact, according to British Water, just a 1.6mm coating of limescale on a heating element makes it work 12% harder as it has to heat the scale before the water. This can severely impact on appliances' working lives and increase the likelihood of breakdowns.



KEVIN JOHNSON

Kevin is MD of Monarch Water, Chairman of BEAMA (water softener division) and Technical Director of the UK Water Treatment Association. He has played an active role, working with key industry boiler and chemical manufacturers, to formulate a common position on the benefits of soft water in homes and industry. He helped rewrite the BS7593 code of practice, using his 30 years' experience to make the case for water softeners in every hard water home.



## FIT FOR PURPOSE

When it comes to water softeners one size doesn't fit all, so installers need to calculate the correct unit for their customers, which is relatively straight forward. Installers simply take the number of bedrooms and the maximum number of potential occupants and allow for 150 litres per person, per day.

## Green machines

Sustainability has become an increasingly important issue to consumers, so it's important that installers are up-to-date with the latest technological advancements. Introducing the very latest in sustainable water softening technology will not only create a positive opinion of installers as cutting edge industry professionals, but forge trusting and lucrative relationships with customers too.

Consumers' focus on water and energy consumption has been the driving force behind innovation in the water softener market, with new models designed to be more compact, easier to install and more efficient than their older counterparts.

With 70% of equipment failure attributed to hard water, tackling the issue of limescale is essential to increase longevity of equipment. Water softeners offer whole house protection because not only will they prevent any new limescale from building up, but they will remove any that already exists.

The latest generation of water softening units feature the innovative Rapid-fit bypass, which removes 80% of equipment needed, making installation quicker and easier than ever before. These new sustainable models also use 12% less salt and 24% less water, making them the most sustainable option in their class.

## Soft sell

With all the benefits that water softeners offer customers, it really isn't a hard sell. When investing in a new bathroom it makes logical



Hi-Flow Rapid-Fit bypass for easy installation



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sense to protect it, so encouraging customers to view water softeners as an insurance policy to protect their whole home is the key to securing sales.

Ridding homes of limescale with the help of a water softener will not only mean softer water and less scrubbing, it will lower energy and water consumption too. Dishwashers and washing machines will produce better results, while fewer detergents and chemicals will be needed throughout the home. Additionally, skin and hair will feel softer as all the scale has been removed from the water.

Cost will always be a sticking point, but with payback in as little as four years, water softeners really are an affordable luxury. Water softeners offer savings of around £200 a year once installed, making the running costs of around £8-10 per household member negligible. Therefore it's essential that installers point out the lifetime benefits when customers are considering the cost.

Of course, there's got to be something in it for installers too. By purchasing the latest in water softening technology from a merchant, at a trade discount, installers can offer a competitive supply and install quote, making profits of around £100-150 per unit.

With huge numbers of UK households suffering from the ravages of limescale there is huge scope for sales. The fact that water softeners are compatible with any boiler means every hard water home is a potential customer. By keeping customers informed about the advantages water softeners offer and the sustainable options on the market, installers can help them protect their homes while boosting their own business. ■



Limescale coats pipes, reducing the efficiency of heating systems



For more information, visit

[monarchwater.co.uk](http://monarchwater.co.uk)

