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## Eliminating Bottled Water - The Whys and Hows

### Why should we cut down on the use of bottled water?

Brittan's Royal Statistical Society has chosen the winning [International Statistic of 2018](#) - 90.5%: This statistic represents the proportion of plastic waste that has never been recycled: estimated at 6,300 million metric tons. The reported percentage of water bottles that end up in a landfill (as opposed to being recycled) varies but it's between 70% and 80%.

For all intents and purposes, plastic isn't biodegradable. It will break down into smaller and smaller fragments by exposure to the sun (photo degradable) and physical actions. They can reach microscopic size over time and become light enough to float in the air, but they will virtually never disappear entirely. Degradation makes plastic debris more biologically harmful - it pollutes waters in its microscopic form, is eaten by marine organisms and enters the food chain. So these unrecycled bottles will always be present in one form or another. A recent [60 Minutes](#) segment graphically illustrated the harm that plastics cause when ingested by animals.

It's not just the end of a bottle's life that is environmentally unsound, the manufacture of them poses concerns as well:

- It takes three times the amount of water in a bottle of water to make it as it does to fill it.
- Plastic water bottles are made from a petroleum product called polyethylene terephthalate (PET), which requires giant amounts of fossil fuels to make and transport.
- The production of bottled water uses 17 million barrels of oil a year. That's slightly more than it would take to fill one million cars a year with fuel.
- It takes almost 2,000 times the energy to manufacture a bottle of water than it does to produce tap water.
- If you fill a plastic water bottle so it is about 25% full, that's about how much oil it took to make the bottle.

### Is the filtered water as safe to drink as that of bottled water?

The water inside these bottles is not safer than tap water. Tap water is governed by the Safe Drinking Water Act, and regulated by the EPA. Bottled water is considered a food product and regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Many words and phrases printed on bottled water, such as spring water or mountain water are not regulated, and should not be inferred to impart purity or special properties. As an illustration, Food Safety News reports that in June 2015, 14 different brands of bottled water by one company from two separate plants using the same spring water source had to be recalled because of possible contamination with E. coli bacteria. Microbial contamination can cause problems in bottled water just like in tap water.

### What can we do?

At our Corporate EHS&S office in Pittsburgh, PA, we installed filtered water stations in all kitchens and provided employees with reusable water bottles. By eliminating bottled water, we will save approximately \$2,400 annually and eliminated 9,912 plastic water bottles from the environment. The filtered water uses an activated carbon filter to reduce chlorine taste and odor and other contaminants such as dirt and particles as small as 0.5 micron in size and it also provides protection against organisms such as Cryptosporidium and Giardia. For more information on the Pittsburgh water project, contact [Katy Rullo](#).

The elimination of bottled water is one element of CBS Strategic Sourcing's 2018 "[1, 2, 3, GREEN](#)" campaign. For further information on this campaign and its initiatives, contact [Audrey Vinant-Tang](#).