

## **Al Ain Water Company 'shrinks' the amount of waste**

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While we look at the waste of water in our homes, we could also cast a glance at the number of plastic water bottles that find its way into the garbage each day.

Al Ain Mineral Water Company (PJSC) brings forward an idea to avoid the waste of plastic and save the environment.

The 'Shrink-A-Bottle' campaign is an initiative that aims to inform people of the need to recycle.

The campaign encourages consumers to reduce Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) waste by utilising a bottle shrinking appliance, which reduces the size of an empty PET bottle to 15 per cent of its original size within 10 seconds.

Fasahat Beg, general manager of Al Ain Mineral Water Company, said: "The machine we are using is very adaptable and can shrink bottles between 250 millilitres and 2.5 litres. We have no limitations as to the brand name. We shrink all PET bottles, as our prime focus is to reduce the volume of plastic in the environment across the UAE."

The company has partnered with Horizon Technologies, the first PET recycling factory in the Middle East, which converts almost all bottles collected in the region into PET flakes. These flakes are then used to produce high quality packaging and other related products.

According to Al Ain Mineral Water Company, the volume of PET waste collected on an annual basis in the region is approximately 7,000 tonnes (7,000,000 kilograms). This eco-friendly approach thus plans to bring a significant decrease in the volume of PET waste across the UAE. Beg said: "If every one of thousand bottles sold by us is shrunk, the volume of PET waste will come down by at least 10 per cent, on average."

Recycled plastic can be used in the production of non-food applications. Beg said: "Water bottles that are made out of PET are recyclable and do not pose a threat to the environment when recycled. Recycled PET can be used to produce various other products of household use, such as ice-trays and vegetable oil containers."

The campaign was taken a step further, when school children were encouraged to get involved in shrinking the bottles. Beg said: "The campaign has been substantially helpful in creating the necessary awareness to preserve the environment. The involvement of schools and children is helping us spread the message, too."

The company is planning the second phase of this campaign, which will provide easy access for residents as bottle collection centres will be built in residential areas.

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