

# Enforcement Policy for the Water

## Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999

**All water companies, legally termed ‘undertakers’, are required to enforce these Regulations to protect public water supplies.**

The Regulations are designed to prevent the waste, misuse, undue consumption, contamination and erroneous measurement of the water supplied to consumers. Of these, the risk of contamination is our greatest concern. Fittings must also be of an appropriate quality and be installed in a workmanlike manner.

This factsheet explains how we do this across the homes and businesses in our area. A more detailed version of our policy is available on request.

### Responsibilities and Liaison

We are responsible for determining our approach to enforcement, including setting targets, training requirements and the monitoring and reporting of enforcement related activities. We liaise with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS). We regularly attend the Technical Support Groups run by WRAS to keep up-to-date with new guidance.

As well as enforcing the requirements of the Regulations, we provide advice to customers, builders, developers and plumbers. We also give information on our website.

### Inspections of Household Properties

We carry out inspections of all newly constructed or converted household properties. Firstly we inspect the external plumbing – the new supply pipe laid underground from the property

boundary to the dwelling. We do not permit a new supply pipe to be connected to our network until we have checked it complies with the Regulations.

In addition to inspecting all supply pipes, we check 1 in 10 properties at random to ensure the internal plumbing arrangements are compliant. This level is increased if the property has another water source, such as a borehole or rainwater harvesting, or systems such as fire sprinklers, solar heating or a swimming pool with an automatic top-up.

Where a *WaterSafe* approved person has completed the work and sent us a certificate of completion, we will carry out a minimal level of inspection for audit purposes.

### Inspection of Non-household properties

This includes all commercial, educational and agricultural premises. As there is a higher risk to water supplies if these properties are non-compliant, we inspect both the external and internal plumbing of all new non-household premises.

In addition we also inspect existing non-household properties on a risk- assessment basis. More resources can then be applied to properties of the highest risk to consumers, calculated by assessing the property type (known as the Fluid Risk Category), the likelihood of contamination and in some cases the management practices on site.

Our target is to visit high risk properties every two years, medium risk properties every five years and low risk properties every ten years.

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Properties with a similar risk to household properties are not classified. Hospitals and farms would usually be classed as high risk.

### Reactive Inspections

We also inspect properties where there is a water quality concern which may be related to non-compliant fittings or the installation method. This may be initiated from the customer, for example due to the taste or colour of the water, or from unusual sample results.

### Contraventions

Where the fittings in a property are found to contravene the Regulations, we will issue a schedule of work required or provide a notice. For an existing property, generally a reinspection will take place 28 days after the initial inspection. We may allow additional time for the rectification work to be completed if we are satisfied that sufficient action is being taken. However, if there is an immediate and serious risk to public health which cannot be immediately rectified, the property will be disconnected from our network until the risk is eliminated. Where there is not an immediate or serious risk but insufficient action is being taken, we assess the need to take legal action.

### Notification

Under the Regulations, a plumber or installer is required to notify the local Water Undertaker before carrying out certain types of work. This includes extensions or alterations to a non-household property. This notification can be

completed online through our website. We will respond to notifications within 10 working days. We will advise whether consent is given, given with conditions or refused. In some cases the property will be inspected.

### Regulation 4

We consider water fittings to be compliant against Regulation 4, which specifies that fittings must be of an appropriate quality or standard and be suitable for the circumstances in which it is used, if it meets one of the following (in order of preference):

- It is approved by WRAS or other approved test house
- It conforms to an appropriate British Standard, European technical approval or equivalent
- Written evidence from the manufacturer of compliance
- Approval by a Regulations Inspector
- Written statement from the manufacturer (low risk fittings only)

### Disputes

We aim to work positively with customers and installers to achieve compliance with the Regulations. Legal and statutory action will only be taken where they fail to take reasonable measures to comply. In the event of a dispute, advice will be sought from WRAS, Defra or, if necessary, an arbitrator.

### Further Information:

- [www.waterplc.com](http://www.waterplc.com)
- [www.wras.co.uk](http://www.wras.co.uk)
- [www.watersafe.org.uk](http://www.watersafe.org.uk)
- [www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)