

Drinking water points

What are the water fittings regulations/byelaws?

These national regulations protect drinking water by ensuring plumbing systems are designed, installed and used safely. If a drinking water fountain, bubbler or bottle filler has any form of mains water supply then the regulations/byelaws apply.

The information provided in this leaflet will highlight the areas of risk and help installers, as well as those responsible for and using, drinking water points to keep the water safe.



How do you comply?

1. Make sure the drinking water point is of an appropriate quality and standard
2. Ensure the drinking water point is installed safely by notifying the local water undertaker at least 10 working days before it is installed.
3. Comply with any conditions of consent such as regular cleaning, water sampling and maintenance requirements.
4. To prevent contamination of other drinking water supplies, install the correct level of backflow protection.



For further information please refer to the Water Regs UK website www.waterregsuk.co.uk

Appropriate quality & standard

To help maintain the quality of drinking water, prevent illness and reduce the waste of water, all water fittings to be used within a drinking point must conform to an acceptable performance specification and satisfy specific requirements for materials in contact with drinking water. If in doubt, ask the manufacturer for evidence their product is compliant with the regulations/byelaws.

Notification

Notification is a simple and essential check to help minimise the contamination risks to water supplies within premises as well as beyond, and a waste of water. Advanced notification of proposed plumbing work in non-household premises is always required unless there is an exemption for work undertaken by an approved contractor. In all circumstances notification is recommended.

Conditions of consent

Where consent to install is granted by the local water undertaker it is likely to be conditional on a number of measures which will help to ensure the water remains safe to drink.

Conditions may include regular cleaning, water sampling and maintenance. These activities to be undertaken by, and at the expense of the site operator/owner. Failure to comply with conditions of consent may result in the water undertaker taking enforcement action which may include disconnecting the installation.



Backflow

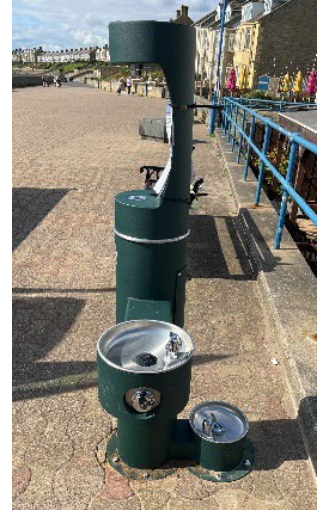
Backflow occurs when a fluid flows in the opposite to the intended, or normal direction of flow, in a plumbing system. Backflow is not theoretical but rather an ever present threat to people's health.

To prevent backflow of contaminated water from a drinking point occurring a barrier (backflow protection) is needed. The

regulations/byelaws identify several different backflow prevention arrangements and devices, each having a fluid category and type of backflow protection rating.

Drinking water points are typically categorised as a fluid category 3 risk but depending upon the design and where installed may be classified as a fluid category 5 risk. High risk concerns include outdoor installations, likelihood of abuse, usage and whether an animal drinking bowl is incorporated.

The backflow protection installed must be suitable and appropriate for the risk. Although tap gaps can be used to provide backflow protection they may not always be considered as suitable. Where this is the case the local water undertaker may require the installation of additional backflow protection on the pipework supplying the drinking point.



Checklist

Thinking about installing a drinking water point

Are there already drinking water points nearby?

What type of drinking water point do users want?

Is the proposed site of installation safe? Complete a water quality risk assessment to identify the risks and controls needed.

What are the likely costs both to install and for on-going inspection, maintenance, cleaning, sampling, testing and water bills.

Talk to the local water undertaker and Environmental Health department

Understand your legal obligations for supplying safe drinking water

The need to comply with the water fittings regulations. This includes but is not limited to:

- Providing notification
- Complying with conditions of consent which are likely to include regular inspection, cleaning, sampling and maintenance of the installation, details of which must be recorded. This will help to minimise the risk of public drinking water supplies being contaminated or wasted.
- Only using water fittings of an appropriate quality and standard
- Ensuring appropriate, adequate backflow protection is in place
- Using a competent installer such as an approved contractor

Responsibility for supplying safe drinking water. Risks to drinking water quality include but are not limited to exposure to sources of contamination, poor cleanliness, vandalism, low usage. Mitigations, which are likely to be conditions of consent, include but are not limited to

- Trained personnel taking regular water samples
- Testing of water samples by a UKAS accredited drinking water analysis laboratory details of which must be recorded. Any failures to be reported to the local water undertaker.
- Regular cleaning of the installation by trained personnel

Comply with installation and maintenance conditions

Do not install, even if using an approved contractor until consent has been granted

Make sure you understand the conditions of consent and have in place arrangements to comply with the conditions of consent. Failure to do so may result in the local water undertaker taking legal action.

Maintain an on-site technical file which in addition to any records required as a condition of consent includes any certification issued by an approved contractor and the manufacturer's installation and maintenance instructions.