

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Private Water Supplies



The Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009



What do they mean for owners and consumers?

This leaflet explains how the laws affect people who own or use private water supplies

PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

What is a Private Water Supply (PWS)?

In North Norfolk, it is any supply of drinking water not provided by Anglian Water 'mains' supply. A PWS can be:

- a private well (shallow water usually with a brick surround) or a borehole (deep into the chalk aquifer using a narrow sealed pipe) the water from which is intended for human consumption; or
- a 'Private Distribution System' that takes water from the 'mains' supply and further distributes it to other separately owned premises for human consumption.

Both types of PWS may serve businesses and/or domestic houses.

The Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009

The regulations apply to all private water supplies as defined above. The implementation of the regulations is the responsibility of each Local Authority. This is overseen by the Drinking Water Inspectorate.

How do the Regulations work?

The Council has to inspect the supply from source to tap (a 'risk assessment') and take water samples depending on the classification of the supply.

CLASSIFICATIONS

Regulation 9 – Large supplies and supplies to commercial or public premises

- 'Large domestic supplies' (more than 10 cubic meters [m³] used per day or over 50 people) and all 'Commercial supplies'. A risk assessment should be done at least once every five years and sampling at least once per year. Sampling frequency increases if more than 100 m³ of water is used per day.

Regulation 10 – Other private supplies

- 'Small Domestic Supplies' (less than 10 m³ used per day or less than 50 people but supplying more than one property): A risk assessment to be done once every five years and sampling will generally be once every five years. Sampling could be more frequent if indicated by the risk assessment.
- A 'single private dwelling not used for a commercial activity': Sampling and risk assessment will be done only if you ask us to.

What is Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is a detailed investigation and will look at the source of the supply and the surrounding area to see if contamination is possible. It also looks at any storage tanks, treatment systems and the layout of the pipework. It identifies actual and potential hazards that may affect the health of those using the water so that action can be taken to make sure the supply is safe. Sampling parameters may also be added following a risk assessment to ensure the samples provide as much information as possible.

Sampling

Sampling is done to make sure that the water is safe to drink and 'wholesome', as defined in the regulations. The samples are taken from a tap used to supply water for drinking or cooking, usually the kitchen tap. We test the water for the chemicals and bacteria as required in the Regulations.

Results

We aim to send the results of the sampling within 28 days of taking the samples. If the results are unsatisfactory further action will be required, such as an investigation by the Council and/or remedial works by the relevant person(s). If the results indicate an urgent health risk we will phone the relevant person as soon as possible. It is therefore very important that we are kept up to date with correct contact numbers and email addresses.

Notices

RESTRICTION NOTICE (Regulation 18)

If the supply is a potential risk to human health, we can serve a 'Restriction Notice' on the relevant person(s) to prohibit or restrict the use of, and improve the supply. It is an offence to breach or fail to comply with a Restriction Notice.

IMPROVEMENT NOTICES (Section 80 – Water Industry Act 1991)

- If the supply is unwholesome and we cannot gain an informal agreement of remedial works we can serve an Improvement Notice on the relevant person(s). We will specify in the Notice what works or measures are necessary to remedy a failure and the compliance period. We can carry out works and recover the costs.
- If the supply is likely to fail, for example, if the owner of a supply has threatened to cut it off and this affects other properties we can serve a notice to prevent that happening.

What sort of improvements might be needed?

Improvements might be required at the source itself, to the pipes, tanks or to fittings inside your home. Treatment might need to be installed to ensure satisfactory microbiological or chemical quality. Treatment is available to remove most contamination. For example Ultra Violet units for bacterial and filters which can reduce levels of iron and manganese. NNDC have factsheets covering microbiological, iron and nitrate issues with PWS. Please send an e-mail to the address below if you would like us to send you one.

For local contractors look in Yellow Pages or search www.yell.com for 'water treatment' or 'water engineers' in Norfolk. These categories include a few companies who supply and service treatment for PWS. Check that the company has experience of dealing with small scale or domestic PWS and not just Mains water or large commercial sites.

PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

Why do we have to charge for this service?

The absence of central government funding places a financial burden on the Council that can only be relieved by recovering costs from the supply owner. The regulations specify what we can charge for, and how much. The charges are the reasonable costs of providing the service and vary according to the supply classification.

Rights...

Occupiers and visitors to your home or business have the right to expect clean safe drinking water. These regulations mean that we can make sure the water is clean and safe.

Where can I get help?

For general information on Private Water Supplies visit:

www.dwi.defra.gov.uk

(Drinking Water Inspectorate website – click on 'Private water supplies' page).

For specific information relating to your supply please contact us by email or the phone number below.

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