

# The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, The Water Supply (Water Fittings) (Scotland) Byelaws 2014 and the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009

## Information on Notification of Proposed Plumbing Work



This leaflet provides information about The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 in England and Wales, The Water Supply (Water Fittings) (Scotland) Byelaws 2014 and the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.

### What are the Water Fittings Regulations?

The Water Fittings Regulations, or Byelaws in Scotland, hereafter referred to as regulations, are national requirements for the design, installation and maintenance of plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using appliances. Their purpose is to prevent misuse, waste, undue consumption or erroneous measurement of water and, most importantly, to prevent contamination of drinking water.

### Where do they apply?

All plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using equipment in all types of premises supplied or to be supplied from the public water supply come under the regulations. The regulations apply from the point where the water enters the property's underground service pipe. Premises without a public water supply connection are not governed by these regulations.

### Who has to comply with the Regulations?

Owners and occupiers of premises and anyone who installs plumbing systems or water fittings have the legal duty to ensure that the systems satisfy the regulations. Architects, building developers and plumbers have to follow the regulations on behalf of future owners or occupiers. Advanced notice must be given of most proposed installations to obtain consent for the work from your water supplier.

It is a criminal offence to breach the regulations and offenders may face prosecution.

### Plumbing system design and installation

Plumbing systems must be designed, installed and maintained to meet the requirements of the regulations and their Schedules.

This is to protect water quality, to ensure safety, ease of access for maintenance, detection of leakage, protection against damage or freezing etc. If you are carrying out your own installation work ensure you know what requirements you must meet. If you are employing someone else, consider using an Approved Plumber who will certify compliance of the new installation.

### Prevention of contamination by backflow

Backflow occurs when contaminated water flows in the opposite to intended or normal direction of flow. Where water or water-using equipment is used with fluids or materials which could contaminate the water, there must be adequate protection to stop backflow of potentially contaminated water into other parts of the system, especially drinking water outlets. The regulations define Fluid Risk Categories according to the contaminants which are present and specify the appropriate type of devices or arrangement which must be fitted to protect against backflow.

### Choice of materials and fittings

Plumbing materials and fittings must be of a suitable quality and standard, as defined in Regulation 4(2). Please refer to the Regulation 4(1)(a) guidance published by Water Regs UK for further information.

### Advanced Notification

In most cases, before work starts on any proposed installation, the installer, owner or occupier must obtain the water supplier's consent by giving notification of the details of the proposed work.

Proposed work which must be notified is summarised in the following list.

The installation of a water fitting in connection with:

1. The erection of a building or other structure, not being a pond or swimming pool.
2. The extension or alteration of a water system on any premises other than a house. †
3. A material change of use of any premises

#### 4. The installation of:

- (a) a bath having a capacity, as measured to the centre line of the overflow, of more than 230 litres. \*
  - (b) a bidet with an ascending spray or flexible hose. †
  - (c) a shower unit of a type specified by the Regulator (none are currently specified). \*
  - (d) a pump or booster drawing more than 12 litres per minute, connected directly or indirectly to a supply pipe.
  - (e) a unit which incorporates reverse osmosis.
  - (f) a water treatment unit which produces a waste water discharge or which requires the use of water for regeneration or cleaning.
  - (g) a reduced pressure zone (RPZ) valve assembly or other mechanical device for protection against a fluid which is in Fluid Category 4 or 5.
  - (h) a garden watering system unless designed to be operated by hand. \*
  - (i) any water system laid outside a building either less than 750mm or more than 1350mm below ground level.
5. The construction of a pond or swimming pool over 10,000 litres capacity, designed to be replenished automatically with water supplied by a public water supplier. \*

In Northern Ireland and Scotland, in addition to the above, notification is required for:

- grey water, recycled water, reclaimed water and rainwater harvesting systems.
- water systems for firefighting, including domestic sprinklers.
- a flexible shower hose or other flexible outlet for use in conjunction with a WC. †
- a 'shower toilet' or 'bidet-toilet' where either as part of the WC itself or as an addition or adaptation of it, a stream of water is provided from below the spillover level of the WC pan for personal cleansing. †

In Scotland, there is an additional requirement for notification of:

- any system incorporating a private water supply.

## Details to be notified

For installations to be supplied with water from the public water supply, the following information must be sent to your local water supplier:

- The name and address of the person giving notice and, if different, the name and address of the person to whom the consent should be sent.
- A description of the proposed work or any significant change of use of premises.
- The location of the premises and their use or intended use.
- Except for items marked (\*) in the list above, a plan of those parts of the premises which relate to the proposed work and a diagram showing the pipework and fittings to be installed.
- The plumbing contractor's name and address, if an Approved Plumber is to do the work.

## Granting consent

There is no charge by your water supplier for dealing with notifications or granting consent. Work on installations must not start until consent has been given. Consent will not be withheld unreasonably, and may be granted subject to conditions, which must be followed. If within ten working days of receipt of a valid notification by the water supplier, consent is neither granted nor refused, it is deemed to have been granted. This does not alter the obligation upon the installer and owner or occupier to see that the Regulations are fully met.

## Approved Plumbers

An Approved Plumber will certify that his installation work satisfies the regulations. In the event of breaches of the regulations in connection with the certified work, the owner or occupier can use the certificate as a legal defence against any resulting prosecution. An Approved Plumber, when installing items marked (†) in the list above, does not have to receive prior consent before starting work, but on completion in addition to supplying a certificate to the person who asked for the work to be done, a copy of the compliance certificate must also be sent to the water supplier.

Most UK water suppliers either operate their own approved plumbers' scheme or support the national Water Industry Approved Plumbers' Scheme (WIAPS), whose members have demonstrated their experience of plumbing work and knowledge of the Regulations and have liability

insurance cover. Contact your water supplier for a list of Approved Plumbers who are available for work or look on the Water Regs UK website for details. The Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering, the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers Federation (SNIPEF) and the Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors (APHC) also list Approved Plumbers (see below for contact details).

## Where can I get a copy of the Regulations and further advice?

The Regulations and their Schedules (SI 1999 No. 1148 and No. 1506) are available from HMSO and the Internet: ([www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/industry/wsregs99/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/industry/wsregs99/index.htm)).

The Government also has published a Guidance Document relating to the Schedules ([www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/industry/wsregs99/guide](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/industry/wsregs99/guide)).

The text of all these documents is included with detailed Water Industry guidance and interpretation in the 'Water Regulations Guide', available from the Water Regs UK.

## Useful contacts:

Water Regs UK,  
Unit 13, Willow Road, Pen y Fan Industrial Estate, Crumlin,  
Gwent, NP11 4EG  
Tel: 0333 207 9030  
Website: [www.waterregsuk.co.uk](http://www.waterregsuk.co.uk)

Water Industry Approved Plumbers Scheme (WIAPS): as for Water Regs UK above.

CIPHE:  
64 Station Lane, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6NB  
Tel: 01708 472791 Website: [www.iphe.org.uk](http://www.iphe.org.uk)

SNIPEF:  
Bellevue House, 22 Hopetoun Street, Edinburgh, EH7 4GH  
Tel: 0131 556 0600 Website: [www.snipef.org](http://www.snipef.org)

APHC:  
12 The Pavilions, Cranmore Drive, Solihull, B90 4SB  
Tel: 0121 711 5030 Website: [www.aphc.co.uk](http://www.aphc.co.uk)

Water Regs UK,  
Unit 13, Willow Road, Pen-y-Fan Industrial  
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