

Plumbing maintenance: at home



What are the water fittings regulations/byelaws?

These national regulations protect drinking water by ensuring plumbing systems are designed, installed and used safely.

This leaflet highlights the importance of plumbing maintenance in the home, not only to make sure plumbing systems are working as they should without leaking or affecting the quality of your drinking water.

When do they apply to plumbing systems?

If a plumbing system at home has any form of mains water supply the regulations/byelaws apply.

How do you comply?

Ensure plumbing systems do not contaminate, waste or unduly use drinking water by:

1. Only using water fittings which are of an [appropriate quality and standard](#)
2. Correctly installing water fittings and if applicable [notifying](#) the [local water undertaker](#)
3. Installing the correct level of protection to prevent [backflow](#)
4. Regularly checking your plumbing systems and replacing worn fittings to help stop leaks and contamination.

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

Backflow is an ever present rather than theoretical risk. It occurs when fluid in a plumbing system flows in the opposite to the intended or normal direction of flow.

To prevent this a barrier (backflow protection) that stops contaminated fluid flowing backwards is needed. The regulations/byelaws identify several different backflow prevention arrangements and devices, each having a rating based on fluid category and type of backflow.

What is maintenance?

Routine visual inspection and servicing checks to ensure water fittings are working properly. Dependant on the type of fitting or installation the necessary maintenance may include, servicing, replacement of worn out or faulty water fittings.



Why is maintenance important?

Maintaining water fittings is just as important as ensuring they are of an appropriate quality and standard. Periodic servicing checks and replacement will help to identify water fittings which are faulty, damaged, leaking or need to be replaced.

When does lack of maintenance become a problem?

Water fittings and appliances will have a limited lifespan and can over time become faulty, which can result in leaks and other potentially costly problems at home.

Fitting Types	Leakage	Water quality problems e.g. taste, odour, debris
Flexible hoses	X	X
Taps	X	X
Check valves		X
Water Conditioners		X
Cold water storage tanks		X
Thermostatic mixer valves	X	X
Showers	X	X
Water Softeners		X
Stop taps	X	
Toilets	X	X



Where can maintenance information be found?

Maintenance requirements can be found in manufacturers' product literature. Information can also be found in various British Standards. The table below identifies some of the inspection and routine maintenance frequencies specified in BS EN 806: part 5

Installation	Inspection	Routine maintenance
Single check valves	Annually	Replacement every 10 years
Double check valves	Annually	Replacement every 10 years
Filters	Every 6 months	Every 6 months
Active media filters	Every 2 months	Every 6 months
Water softeners	Every 2 months	Every 6 months
Water heater	Every 2 months	Annually
Pipework	Annually	Annually