

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

# Private Water Supplies



## Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016



**What do they mean for owners and consumers?**

This leaflet explains how the law affects people who own or use private water supplies

# PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

## What is a Private Water Supply?

In North Norfolk, it is any supply of drinking water not provided by an Anglian Water 'mains' supply. A private water supply (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), 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 safety and quality of water can be secured if the supply is properly protected, treated and maintained. Supplies can become contaminated with bacteria or other substances that can cause illness. Contamination may not change the smell, taste or colour of the water. The young and elderly are especially vulnerable to these illnesses.

## Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016

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 (DWI).

## 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 metres [m<sup>3</sup>] used per day or over 50 people) and all 'Commercial supplies'; this includes rented properties where the tenant pays rent to a landlord.

A risk assessment should be done at least every five years and sampling at least once per year. Sampling frequency increases if more than 100 m<sup>3</sup> of water is used per day.

### Regulation 10 – Other private supplies

- 'Small Domestic supplies' (less than 10 m<sup>3</sup> used per day or less than 50 people but supplying more than one property).

A risk assessment should 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.

# PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

## **What is a 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 action can be taken to make sure the supply is safe. Sampling parameters may also be added after a risk assessment so the samples provide as much information as possible.

## **Sampling**

Sampling is done to make sure 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 chemicals and bacteria as required by 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 we are kept up to date with correct contact numbers and e-mail 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 needed 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 types of contamination. For example, ultra violet (UV) units for bacteria and filters which can reduce levels of iron and manganese. NNDC have factsheets covering microbiological, iron and nitrate issues with PWS. See the [NNDC website](#) for further details or if you would like us to send you one please e-mail the Commercial Team.

# PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

## Regulation 5

This Regulation is to prevent the use of products or substances known to have a detrimental effect on the safety or quality of drinking water. Any new or recently fitted products or substances which come into contact with the water should comply with Regulation 5. Those that are commonly used in in PWS should already comply. Check with your water treatment company or contact the DWI for more information if needed.

To find local water treatment companies try an internet search for 'Norfolk private water treatment'. Some companies are also in Yellow Pages under 'Water Treatment'. Look for companies who specialise in supplying and servicing treatment for PWS. Check that the company has experience of dealing with small scale or domestic PWS.

## Why do we have to charge for this service?

The regulations allow the council to recover the reasonable costs of providing the service because central government does not provide any funding for it. The charges vary according to the supply classification and the analysis needed. The Regulations specify what we can charge for and how much.

## Rights.

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

## Where can I get help?

For general information on Private Water Supplies visit:

<http://www.dwi.defra.gov.uk/private-water-supply/index.htm>

The Drinking Water Inspectorate has a statutory duty to act as technical advisors to Local Authorities about the implementation of the PWS Regulations.

For specific information relating to your supply please contact us using the details below.

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