



Regulations and plumbing

The Water Supply (Water Fittings)
Regulations 1999

What are water fittings regulations?

The Water Fittings Regulations set out installation requirements for plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using appliances. They are national requirements covering design, installation and maintenance.

They prevent inefficient use, waste, undue consumption or incorrect measurement of water and, most importantly, contamination of drinking water.

Water supply companies are responsible for enforcing the regulations.

Where do they apply?

All plumbing systems, water fittings and equipment supplied, or to be supplied, from public water supply in all types of premises come under these regulations.

They apply from the point where water enters a property's private service pipe.

Premises that don't have access to a mains water supply connection are not governed by the regulations.

Who must comply with the regulations?

Owners and occupiers of premises, and people installing plumbing systems or water fittings, have a legal duty to ensure the systems satisfy the regulations. And advance notice must be given of proposed installations in most cases (see page 3 for further information).

Architects, developers and plumbers must comply with the regulations on behalf of future owners or occupiers.

How are they enforced?

Water supply companies are responsible for enforcing the regulations and inspect new and existing installations to check they are being met.

Our code of practice on enforcement has more information and a copy can be provided on request.

Where breaches are found, they must be remedied as soon as practicable. Where they pose a risk to health, the water supply may be disconnected immediately to protect the health of occupants or others using the same public supply.

How do the regulations affect you?

Plumbing system compliance

Plumbing systems must be designed, installed and maintained to meet the regulations' requirements and plumbing materials and fittings must be of a suitable standard. It's not illegal to sell unsuitable fittings and appliances but they would not comply with regulations if fitted, so check suitability before buying.

The regulations list the standards for suitability and the Water Fittings and Materials Directory, published by the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS), provides up-to-date details of a wide range of items which have been tested and shown to comply.

Plumbing must be properly installed and maintained to protect water quality, ensure safety, ease of access for maintenance, detection of leakage, protection against damage or freezing etc.

If you are carrying out your own installation, make sure you know which requirements you must meet. If you are

employing someone else, consider using an approved plumber who will guarantee the new installation complies.

Advance notification

In most cases the installer, owner or occupier must obtain the water supplier's

consent before work starts on any proposed installation.

This applies to water system installations or alterations in connection with any of the following:

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 the premises.
4	The installation of:
4a	A bath having a capacity, as measured to the centre line of the overflow, of more than 230 litres.*
4b	A bidet with an ascending spray or flexible hose.**
4c	A shower unit of a type specified by the regulator.*(as yet none are currently specified)
4d	A pump or booster drawing more than 12 litres per minute, connected directly or indirectly to a supply pipe.
4e	A unit which incorporates reverse osmosis.
4f	A water treatment unit which produces a waste water discharge or which requires the use of water for regeneration or cleaning.
4g	A reduced pressure zone (RPZ) valve assembly or other mechanical device for protection against a fluid which is in Fluid Category 4 or 5.
4h	A garden watering system except one designed to be operated by hand.*
4i	Any water system laid outside a building either less than 750 mm or more than 1350 mm 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 Wessex Water.*

* See *Details to be notified* section on page 4

Installation by an approved plumber of items marked ** doesn't need prior consent, but on completion compliance certificate copies must be sent to Wessex Water and to the person who asked for the work to be done.

Choice of materials and fittings

Plumbing materials and fittings must meet the standards in the regulations and must:

- carry an appropriate CE mark in accordance with EU Council Directive 89/106/EEC or
- conform to an appropriate harmonised standard or European technical approval or
- conform to an appropriate British Standard or some other European Economic Agreement state specification which provides an equivalent level of protection and performance or
- conform to a specification approved by the regulator.

Prevention of backflow

Where water or water-using equipment is used with fluids or materials which could contaminate it, there must be adequate protection to stop the backflow of potentially contaminated water to other parts of the system, especially drinking water.

The regulations define fluid risk categories according to the type of contaminants present and specify the type of prevention device which must be fitted to guard against backflow.

Details to be notified

For installations connected to our supplies, the following information must be provided on our water supply (mains and service application form) which can be found on our website www.wessexwater.co.uk/developers or by contacting

new.connections@wessexwater.co.uk,
tel: 01225 526299.

- The name and address of the person giving notice and, if different, of the person to whom the consent should be sent.
- A description of the proposed work and any related change of use of premises.
- The location of the premises and their use or intended use.
- Except for items marked * on the table, a plan of that part of the premises relating 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.

Approved plumbers

An approved plumber will provide a certificate saying that his or her installation or maintenance work satisfies the regulations.

If breaches of regulations are found in the certified work the legal responsibility falls on the approved plumber and not on the owner or occupier.

Wessex Water supports the national register for approved plumbing businesses – Watersafe. Watersafe is the national hub and search facility for all approved contractors schemes, including the Water Industry Approved Plumbers scheme (WIAPs). WIAPs members have demonstrated their experience of plumbing work and knowledge of the regulations and have liability insurance cover. To check for your nearest approved plumber visit www.wras.co.uk

If you use a member of one of the approved schemes, plans will not be required for domestic premises, although they will still be required for industrial, commercial and agricultural proposals.

Type approval for building developers

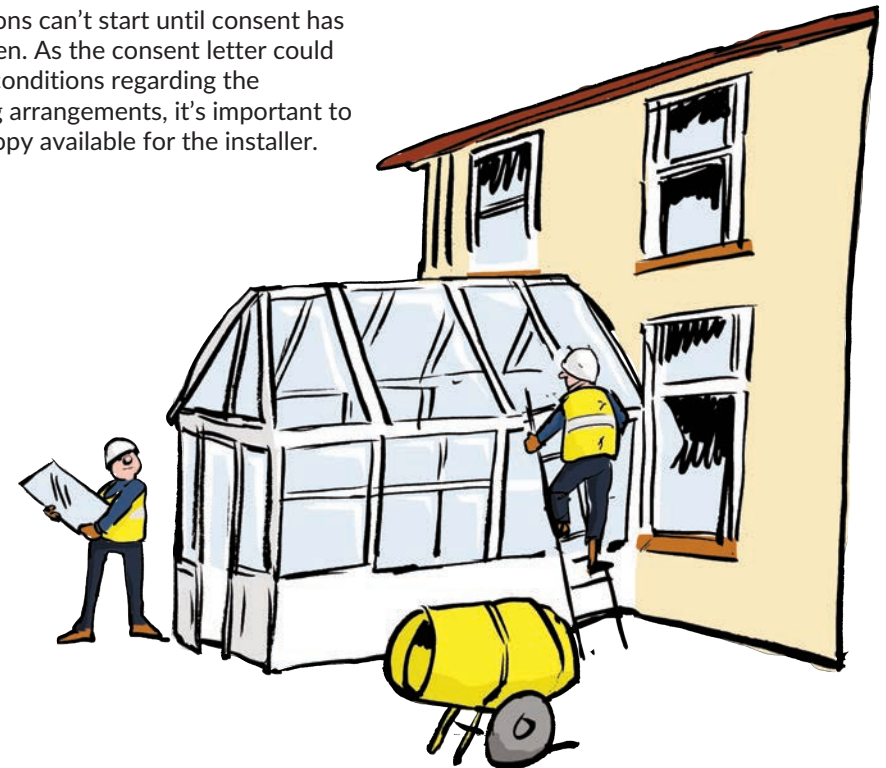
Housing developers building schemes based on standard designs can submit their standard plans for 'type approval'. Once approved they need not re-submit further copies of the plumbing plans with every notification. Any changes in the design or fittings must be notified.

Granting consent

We don't charge for notification or for granting consent but work on installations can't start until consent has been given. As the consent letter could contain conditions regarding the plumbing arrangements, it's important to keep a copy available for the installer.

Failure to comply with the regulations regarding new installations could mean the water supply is withdrawn. Consent will not be withheld unreasonably and may be granted subject to conditions, which must be followed.

Under the regulations, if consent is not given within 10 working days it is assumed to have been granted. This does not alter the installer, owner or occupier's obligation to see that the regulations are fully met.



Further information

The regulations

The regulations and their schedules are statutory instruments (1999, No. 1148 and No. 1506) available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office, HMSO, or by visiting www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi

The government has also published a guidance document relating to the schedules which can be found at www.dwi.defra.gov.uk/stakeholders/guidance-and-codes-of-practice

The text of all these documents is included with detailed water industry guidance and interpretation in the Water Regulations Guide, available from the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme, www.wras.co.uk

We can't provide a design service for installations but we will try to answer individual queries from customers, designers, builders and installers about the interpretation of the regulations.

Taste and odour

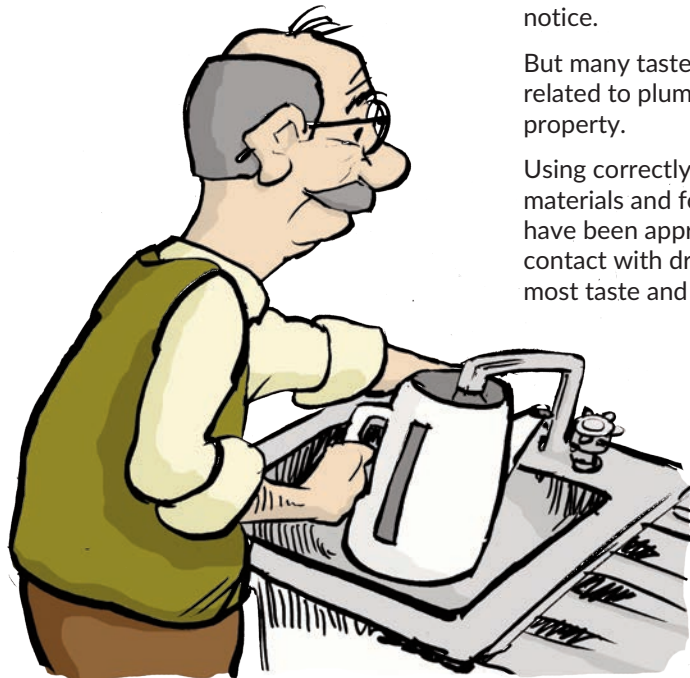
The content of water is complex and varies with the different rocks and soils it filters through.

This means that its taste can vary from area to area, eg, in a chalk area the mineral calcium carbonate will be present in the water whereas soft, upland water contains fewer minerals. Water temperature also influences the perception of taste and odour.

Some people are more sensitive to taste and odour than others. They can detect tastes in water that most people do not notice.

But many tastes and odours in water are related to plumbing or appliances inside a property.

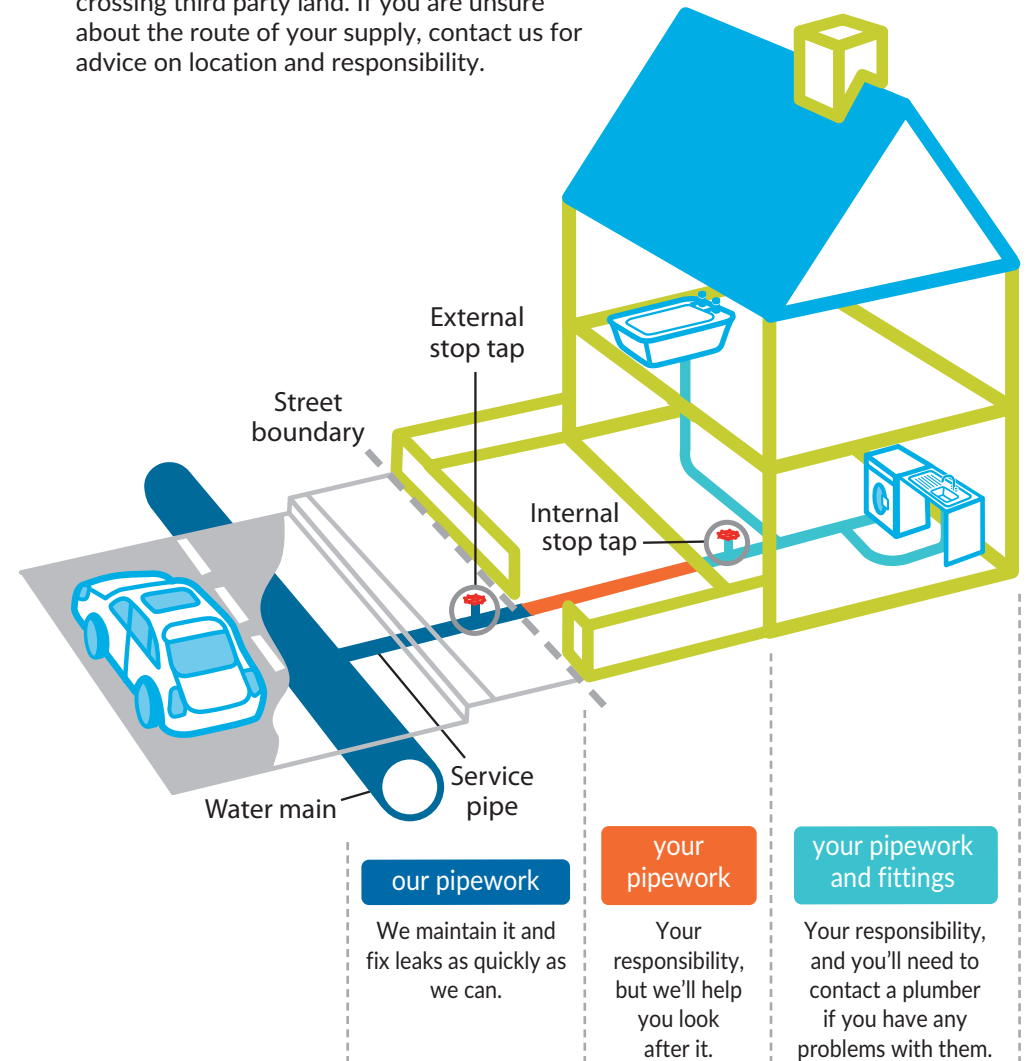
Using correctly installed plumbing materials and food grade fittings which have been approved by WRAS for use in contact with drinking water resolves most taste and odour problems.



Pipework responsibility

You are responsible for:

- the maintenance of the plumbing inside your property, for example, all pipework, water tanks, taps and overflows
- the service pipe from your property to the street boundary including any pipework crossing third party land. If you are unsure about the route of your supply, contact us for advice on location and responsibility.



Useful contacts

New Connections

Developer Services, Wessex Water, Claverton Down, Bath BA2 7WW

Telephone: 01225 526 222

Email: supplyconnectionenquiries@wessexwater.co.uk

Website: www.wessexwater.co.uk/developerservices

The Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS)

Unit 13, Willow Road, Pen-y-Fan Industrial Estate, Crumlin, Gwent. NP11 3EG.

Telephone: 01495 248 454.

Email: info@wras.co.uk

Website: www.wras.co.uk

Water Industry Approved Plumbers Scheme (WIAPS)

Unit 13, Willow Road, Pen-y-Fan Industrial Estate,
Crumlin, Gwent. NP11 3EG.

Telephone: 01495 248 454.

Email: info@wras.co.uk

Website: www.wras.co.uk/consumers/approved_plumber_scheme



Meet our people

We have a great team here at Wessex Water and we want to introduce them to you. Visit www.wessexwater.co.uk/careers