

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



NORTH
NORFOLK
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Private water supplies

Private Water Supplies (England)
Regulations 2016 as amended

**What does it
mean for you?**

www.north-norfolk.gov.uk

PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

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

WHAT IS A PRIVATE WATER SUPPLY?

It is any supply of drinking water not provided by a mains water supply. In North Norfolk, a private water supply (PWS) is usually:

- 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

These 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 as amended

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 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 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 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.

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 six weeks 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 insufficient, ie not enough water available.
- If the owner of a supply has threatened to cut it off and this affects other properties we could serve a notice to prevent that happening.

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS MIGHT BE NEEDED?

Improvements might be needed at the source, to 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 has factsheets covering microbiological, iron and nitrate issues with PWS.

See the NNDC website or if you would like us to send you a factsheet please email 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 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:

Commercial Team, Environmental Health
North Norfolk District Council
Holt Road, Cromer, Norfolk, NR27 9EN
t: 01263 516008
e: commercial@north-norfolk.gov.uk
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