

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Private Water Supplies



The Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009



What do they mean for owners and consumers?

This leaflet explains how the new laws affect 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 Anglian Water plc. It can be:

- a private well, spring, borehole or stream, the water from which is intended for human consumption, or
- a 'Private Distribution System' that takes drinking water from the 'mains' and further distributes it to others for human consumption via, for example, a network of pipes. Examples of this in North Norfolk include some caravan sites and private estates.

They may serve one property or several and may serve businesses as well as domestic houses.

The Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009

The regulations came into force on 1 January 2010. They are to ensure that water from private supplies is of equal quality to the mains supply. They apply to all private water supplies intended for human consumption.

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

- Large domestic supplies (over 50 people) and all commercial supplies. A full risk assessment to be completed once every five years and sampling at least once per year (frequency depends on volume of water used).
- Small Domestic Supplies (less than 50 people but supplying more than one property): A risk assessment to be completed once every five years and generally sampling will be once every five years. This could possibly be more if indicated by the risk assessment.
- Single Property Supplies (one property only): Sampling and risk assessment will be undertaken only if you ask us to.

What is Risk Assessment?

Risk assessment is a detailed investigation of a supply; it is designed to identify and assess actual and potential hazards associated with each supply so that the type of sampling is appropriate. Each supply has to be risk assessed at least once every five years.

A risk assessment 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, any treatment systems and the pipework. It identifies any actual and potential hazards that may affect the health of those using the water so that you can take action to make sure the supply is safe. Any information you can gather prior to this visit will help to save time and cost (location, records, maintenance, access etc).

PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

Sampling

Sampling is done to make sure that the water is safe to drink and 'wholesome', as defined in the regulations. The samples are usually taken from a tap used to supply water for drinking or cooking. The sampling will be determined by the risk assessment and volume used on the supply. If the risk assessment and sampling shows water quality is consistently good, we can reduce the frequency and type of sampling.

What will we be sampling for?

Untreated water can contain bacteria, or chemical contamination, that may not be detectable by taste or smell. We will test the water for the chemical and microbiological parameters set out in the Regulations.

Results

We will normally send you the results of the sampling within 28 days. If the results are unsatisfactory further action will be required, such as an investigation by the Council or remedial works by you. If the results indicate an urgent health risk we will phone you immediately.

If the supply fails, the Council can do different things depending on whether there is a potential danger to human health or the water is unwholesome. These include informing the consumers, investigating the cause and/or serving notices. There can be a charge of up to £100 for doing investigations.

RESTRICTION NOTICE

If the supply constitutes a risk to human health, we have a new power to serve a Restriction Notice on the relevant person(s) to prohibit or restrict the use of, and improve, the supply. It will be an offence to breach or fail to comply with a Restriction Notice.

AUTHORISATIONS

If a private supply is unwholesome but does not present a risk to health we have the power to grant an 'Authorisation' of different standards for chemical parameters. This is temporary until the necessary remedial action is implemented and cannot be more than three years. An authorisation costs £100.

IMPROVEMENT NOTICE

Where we cannot gain an informal agreement of remedial works and do not grant an authorisation we may 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 have the power to carry out works and recover the costs.

PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

What sort of improvements might be needed?

Improvements might be required at the source itself, to the pipes, tanks or to fittings inside your home; for example, installing appropriate treatment to ensure satisfactory microbiological quality.

Approved contractors

Approved contractors can be found at the UK Water Treatment Association website www.ukwta.org For local contractors look in Yellow Pages under 'Water treatment'.

Why do we have to charge for this service?

A system of charging was introduced in the regulations so local authorities can recover their costs incurred. The absence of central government funding or a grant scheme places a financial burden on the Council that can only be relieved by recovering costs from the supply owner. The charges are the reasonable costs of providing the service and vary according to the type and size of supply. For more details see the enclosed letter or go to the Council's website.

“But I have drunk it for years and it hasn't done me any harm...”

Some people are not affected as much as others. Although you may be OK drinking from your supply after a long time, visitors, particularly the young and the elderly may be made ill if it is contaminated.

Your Rights...

You, your family and visitors to your home or business have the right to expect clean safe drinking water. These regulations mean that we can make sure the water is clean and safe.

Where can I get help?

For further information please contact North Norfolk District Council or visit:

www.privatewatersupplies.gov.uk

www.dwi.gov.uk

Commercial Team, Environmental Health

North Norfolk District Council

Holt Road, Cromer, Norfolk NR27 9EN

Email: commercial@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Tel: 01263 516008

Fax 01263 514627

www.northnorfolk.org

