



Code of Practice on Enforcement of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999

2016

Introduction

The purpose of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 (SI 1148, amendment SI 1506) is to prevent **waste, misuse, undue consumption, contamination and erroneous measurement** of water supplied by a Water Supplier. The Secretaries of State for England and the Welsh Assembly place a duty of enforcement on Water Suppliers. This Code of Practice tells you how Bristol Water Plc will go about duties of enforcement.

Principles of Enforcement

The main purpose of enforcement is to protect drinking water up to the point of use from risks of waste, misuse, undue consumption, contamination and erroneous measurement. Bristol Water will carry out enforcement activities in a fair, practical, cost effective and consistent way that helps to sustain a safe environment.

The effectiveness of legislation depends crucially on the will of individuals to comply with the regulations. Bristol Water recognises that most people want to comply with the law and its aim is to promote best practice by all. However, if necessary, Bristol Water will take firm action, including prosecution, against those who flout the law or act irresponsibly and by so doing put public health at risk and endanger supplies.

Enforcement may be in the form of, advisory visits, informative literature, or dealing with telephone enquiries. Bristol Water welcomes the opportunity to comment on the technical aspects of proposed designs of water installations and fittings. Bristol Water supports work on the development of national and European standards and the testing of water fittings and materials for conformity with these. Such information is available to help raise awareness amongst all who may need to know about the legislation and best practice.

Openness

Bristol Water will provide information in plain language and make it easily available. Bristol Water will be open about its work, including charges that may be made, and where appropriate will consult all relevant groups. Any issues, or problems, will be discussed in confidence; our aim is to resolve all problems in a mutually beneficial manner.

Bristol Water supports the **Water Regulations Advisory Scheme, (WRAS)** which promotes and co-ordinates the uniform interpretation and application of the legislation. WRAS's constitution requires it to liaise with architects, designers, manufacturers, factors, installers, individual users and other interested groups. The service provided by WRAS also includes, advice and technical support.

Standards

The detailed standards and a level of consistency which have to be met by water fittings and installations are fully explained in the "**Water Regulations Guide**". The

guide provides helpful, detailed, technical, and practical explanations.

Information on products that have been tested and found to satisfy the standards is detailed in the WRAS “**Directory of Water Fittings and Materials**” which is published online; access to the directory is free of charge.

Helpfulness

Bristol Water believes that prevention is better than cure and actively works with its customers to help them achieve best practice and compliance. We welcome the opportunity to comment, at an early stage, on plans for water services, as this can be of benefit to all concerned.

Bristol Water will provide a courteous and efficient service. Staff will identify themselves by name, and will provide addresses and telephone numbers for all further contacts within its organisation.

Notifications required by the legislation will be dealt with in line with national standards. Each Water Supplier has its own customer care code and service measures targeted at helping the vulnerable.

Complaints about Service

Bristol Water will maintain a consistent approach to enforcement. If a problem cannot be resolved locally, it may be necessary to consider formal arbitration by a suitably qualified arbitrator.

Disputes

If you have a dispute with your installer Bristol Water can provide advice only on matters of compliance with the Regulations. We are able to advise on best practice but cannot become involved in contractual matters between installers and building owners.

For certain disputes between a customer and their Water Supplier, there is an arbitration process, set out in Regulation 13. This applies when a customer considers the Water Supplier to have imposed unreasonable conditions following notification of proposed work, or where consent for the work to proceed has been unreasonably withheld. It also covers disputes where the Water Supplier has refused to apply for a relaxation of the Regulations from the Government.

Proportionality

Everyone benefits from a water system installed in accordance with the legislation because this ensures water quality is safeguarded from contamination by the use of suitable plumbing products. Water conservation is equally beneficial to all. Bristol

Water will ensure that any enforcement action taken is proportionate to the nature of the assessed risk. As far as the law allows, account will be taken of the circumstances of each case and those of the installer, owner or user of the water fittings, however on occasions immediate remedial action may be required in line with the degree of risk to the water supply.

Bristol Water's highest enforcement priority is prevention of contamination of the water supply. Details of the technical requirements for protection of backflow can be complex and WRAS produces a range of advice leaflets for specific user groups e.g. Agriculture, Ports and Harbours, Dentists, Railways. These leaflets provide general guidance on the best ways to avoid contamination of water supplies in specific situations. Bristol Water will continue to pay attention to the needs of special groups by working with WRAS to develop further the range of literature covering high risk classes of use. These leaflets are free of charge, on request, subject to availability. Bristol Water also enclose a DVD titled (*H2O_h – What are you drinking?*) with the majority of correspondences and all formal reports issued by the Water Regulations team.

Consistency

Bristol Water takes a consistent approach towards enforcement so that the regulations are applied fairly. Staff are trained to a recognised level of knowledge, understanding and competency. Effective training is promoted through continuous development and training to the appropriate standards.

Procedures

The following activities are necessary to ensure a uniform approach to the administration and enforcement of the legislation through the UK.

Education and Awareness

To raise awareness and to inform designers, manufacturers, installers and users of water systems, Bristol Water will, when necessary, conduct site visits and provide information literature. Where appropriate, arrangements will be made for presentations to special interest groups and access will be given to a telephone advice service. Bristol Water will work with WRAS, installer bodies, manufacturers and retail chain outlets to ensure they are kept apprised of compliance with the Water Regulations.

Administration

All Bristol Water Customers are responsible under the Water Industry Act 1991 Section 73 and 74 for ensuring that their pipes, fittings and components are maintained and operate efficiently at all times. Guidance supporting the Regulations requires some backflow prevention devices to be tested and inspected regularly. For the most serious risk categories, records of such tests must be kept on the

premises by the customer; this is a condition of supply. In addition the configurations and alterations of some plumbing system must be notified to the Company. A leaflet detailing notification requirements is available to customers. On receipt of a Notice of Intended Work, Bristol Water will consider the notice and its content and may arrange to carry out an inspection. Bristol Water may also request additional information to enable compliance, or otherwise, of the proposed works to be assessed. Where the installer is a member of an Approved Contractors Scheme, a certificate of compliance must be issued to the customer and Bristol Water on completion of the work.

Inspections

Bristol Water may carry out three types of inspections. These can be described in general terms as **Proactive (Planned)**, **Reactive** and **Audit**.

Proactive inspections are carried out at selected new and existing industrial, agricultural, commercial and domestic premises to assess their compliance with the Regulations. Bristol Water will inform owners and operators in advance of an inspection, to make an appointment for a site inspection. Sample inspections of housing developments will be carried out as part of a programme of enforcement work.

Reactive inspections may be carried out in response to customer request or following other contacts which trigger an investigation e.g. failure of a water quality test or customer complaints or evidence of poor risk management of that water system. Some water samples fail water quality standards because of poor plumbing arrangements, unsuitable water fittings or pipe condition. Reports from customers about taste, odour, discolouration or persistent poor pressure can indicate inappropriate plumbing arrangements and an inspection may be necessary to identify the cause.

Audit inspections relate to the Approved Plumber Scheme and, therefore, there is a need to ensure continued compliance with national and local standards.

Enforcement

Before any enforcement action is taken, an opportunity will be provided to discuss the circumstances of the case and, if possible, resolve any differences. However, immediate action may sometimes be required in the interests of public health or safety. This includes disconnecting the supply and confiscating apparatus. Where this is necessary a written explanation/formal report will be given.

General Information and contacts

Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS)

- (a) - Fern Close, Pen-y-Fan Industrial Estate, Oakdale, Gwent. NP11 3EH
- (t) - 0333 207 9030
- (e) - info@wras.co.uk

Water Regulations team - Network - Bristol Water plc.

- (a) - Bristol Water plc., PO Box 218, Bridgwater Road, Bristol. BS99 7AU
- (t) - 01179 638516
- (e) - waterregulations@bristolwater.co.uk

Review

This Enforcement Policy will be reviewed every year or when necessary as a result of changes in legislation or centrally issued guidance.

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