

This leaflet provides information about giving advanced notice of work on plumbing systems as required by the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations and Byelaws 2000 in Scotland.

What are the Water Fittings Regulations?

The Water Fittings Regulations (or Byelaws 2000 in Scotland) are national requirements for the design, installation and maintenance of plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using appliances. Their purpose is to prevent misuse, waste, undue consumption or erroneous measurement of water and, most importantly, to prevent contamination of drinking water.

They replace the former Water Supply Byelaws which each water supplier has administered for similar purposes for many years.

Where do they apply?

Since 1 July 1999 in England and Wales, and 4 April 2000 in Scotland, all plumbing systems, water fittings and equipment supplied, or to be supplied, with water from the public supply come under these regulations. This applies to systems in all types of premises. The regulations apply from the point where water enters the property's underground service pipe. Premises without a public water supply connection are not governed by these regulations.

Who has to comply with the Regulations?

Owners and occupiers of premises and anyone who installs plumbing systems or water fittings have the legal duty to ensure that the systems satisfy the regulations. Architects, building developers and plumbers have to follow the regulations on behalf of future owners or occupiers. Advanced notice must be given of most proposed installations to obtain consent for the work from your water supplier.

It is a criminal offence to breach the Regulations and offenders may face prosecution.

Plumbing system design and installation

Plumbing systems must be designed, installed and maintained to meet the requirements of the Regulations and their Schedules. This is to protect water quality, to ensure safety, ease of access for maintenance, detection of leakage, protection against damage or freezing etc. If you are doing your own installation, ensure you know what requirements you must meet. If you are employing someone else, consider using an **Approved Plumber** who will certify compliance of the new installation.

Prevention of contamination by backflow

Where water or water-using equipment is used with fluids or materials which could contaminate it, there must be adequate protection to stop backflow of potentially contaminated water into other parts of the system, especially drinking water outlets. The Regulations define Fluid Risk Categories according to the contaminants which are present and specify the appropriate type of prevention devices which must be fitted to guard against backflow.

Choice of materials and fittings

Plumbing materials and fittings must meet the standards given in the Regulations. At present they must either 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 Regulators.

The Water Fittings and Materials Directory, published by the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS), gives up-to-date details of a wide range of items which meet the Regulators Specification. Whilst it is not illegal to sell unsuitable fittings and appliances, to install one would be illegal, so check suitability before purchase.



Advanced Notification

In most cases, before work starts on any proposed installation, the installer, owner or occupier must obtain the water supplier's consent by giving notification of the details of the proposed work.

Proposed work which must be notified is summarised in the following list.

The installation of a water fitting in connection with:

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 any premises

The installation of:

- 4(a) a bath having a capacity, as measured to the centre line of the overflow, of more than 230 litres. (*)
- 4(b) a bidet with an ascending spray or flexible hose. (#)
- 4(c) A shower unit of a type specified by the Regulator (but none is currently specified May 2001).(*)
- 4(d) a pump or booster drawing more than 12 litres per minute, connected directly or indirectly to a supply pipe.
- 4(e) a unit which incorporates reverse osmosis.
- 4(f) a water treatment unit which produces a wastewater discharge or which requires the use of water for regeneration or cleaning.
- 4(g) a reduced pressure zone (RPZ) valve assembly or other mechanical device for protection against a fluid which is in Fluid Category 4 or 5.
- 4(h) a garden watering system except one designed to be operated by hand.(*)
- 4(i) 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 a public water supplier.(*)

Details to be notified

For installations to be supplied with water from the public water supply, the following information must be sent to your local water supplier:

- The name and address of the person giving notice and, if different, the name and address of the person to whom the consent should be sent.
- A description of the proposed work or any significant change of use of premises.
- The location of the premises and their use or intended use.
- Except for items marked (*) in the list above, a plan of those parts of the premises which relate 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.

'Type approval' for building developers

Housing developers who build dwellings containing the same design of plumbing layout and terminal fittings can submit plans for 'type approval'. Once approved, notifications of housing developments based upon these approved plans can then be made without having to supply further copies of plumbing plans with every application. Any changes in the design or the terminal fittings to be used must be notified.

Granting consent

There is no charge by your water supplier for dealing with notifications or granting consent. Work on installations must not start until consent has been given. Consent will not be withheld unreasonably, and may be granted subject to conditions, which must be followed. If within ten working days of receipt of a valid notification by the water supplier, consent is neither granted with conditions nor refused, it is deemed to have been granted. This does not alter the obligation upon the installer and owner or occupier to see that the Regulations are fully met.

Approved Plumbers

An Approved Plumber will certify that his installation work satisfies the Regulations. In the event of breaches of the Regulations in connection with the certified work, the owner or occupier can use the certificate as a legal defence against any resulting prosecution. An Approved Plumber, when installing items marked (#) in the list above, does not have to receive prior consent before

starting work, but on completion in addition to supplying a certificate to the person who asked for the work to be done, a copy of the compliance certificate must also be sent to the water supplier.

The UK water suppliers either operate their own Approved Plumbers Scheme or support the national Water Industry Approved Plumbers Scheme (WIAPS), whose members have demonstrated their experience of plumbing work and knowledge of the Regulations and have liability insurance cover. Contact your water supplier for a list of Approved Plumbers who are available for work or look on the WRAS website for details. The Institute of Plumbing and the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers Federation (SNIPEF) also list Approved Plumbers (see below for contact details).

Where can I get the Regulations and further advice?

The Regulations and their Schedules (SI 1999 No. 1148 and No. 1506) are available from HMSO and the Internet: (www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/stat.htm).

The Government also has published a Guidance Document relating to the Schedules (www.environment.detr.gov.uk/wsregs99/waterfit).

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.

Useful contacts:

The Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS):

Fern Close, Pen-y-Fan Industrial Estate,
Oakdale, Gwent, NP11 3EH.
Tel: 01495 248454 Fax: 01495 249234.

WRAS Website: www.wras.co.uk

Water Industry Approved Plumbers Scheme (WIAPS):
as for WRAS above.

The Institute of Plumbing:

64 Station Lane, Hornchurch, RM12 6NB.
Tel: 01708 472791 Website: www.plumbers.org.uk

SNIPEF:

2 Walker Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7LB.
Tel: 0131 225 2255 Website: www.snipef.org

WRAS
Water Regulations Advisory Scheme

The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 and The Water Byelaws 2000 (Scotland)

Information on Notification of Proposed Plumbing Work

WRAS
Water Regulations Advisory Scheme