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Water regulations

for agricultural premises

Information guide for farmers

Does your agricultural premises comply with water supply regulations?

The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations were introduced in 1999 by the Government to protect public health by safeguarding the drinking water supply. Their main aim is to prevent contamination but also cover misuse, waste of water, undue consumption and erroneous measurement, by implementing a series of rules and guidance about how water fittings should be used and installed.

These regulations - which everyone with a mains water connection has to comply with, normally apply from the point water enters the property, to where the water is used.

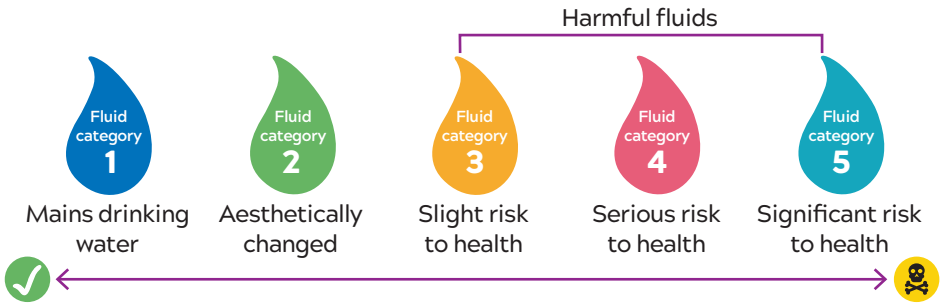
Whilst the regulations aren't retrospective - older installations need to comply with the byelaws that were applicable at the time. However, if the installation poses a contamination or waste of water risk, current regulations will be enforced.

Our legal obligations

As a water company, we're legally obliged to enforce the regulations in the area where we supply water. That's why we carry out inspections of new and existing installations to make sure they're compliant. Where the regulations aren't being followed, we issue improvement notices stating a date for this to be rectified. If there's a serious infringement, we can legally disconnect the water supply to protect public health.

How we put fluids into categories

The regulations place potential contaminants into one of five fluid categories depending on the harm a particular pollutant may cause - one is the lowest category and five is the highest. We can protect the water supply by placing a series of barriers between the mains water and the contaminant to prevent them mixing and going back into the mains water supply. These barriers range from a single check valve to a physical air gap.



Advice & tips

1 Animal drinking troughs

As water in troughs is exposed to the elements, it can become contaminated - for example, by animal droppings. This puts it in the highest fluid risk category, so it requires a suitable barrier to prevent contaminated water getting back into the mains water.

Avoid:

- Submerged inlet
- Overflowing trough

Solutions:

- Fit a raised service box: This allows water to go over the edge of the trough before submerging the inlet.
- Cut out the side of the trough: This prevents water submerging the inlet.

2 Outside taps

The risk here changes depending on the use.

Use	Risk	Action required
General watering Common domestic use	Fluid category 3	Double check valve
Light commercial use	Fluid category 3	Double check valve and retractable reel with trigger gun
Moderate commercial use	Fluid category 4	RPZ valve or DB pipe interrupter (if suitable)
Heavy commercial use, such as washing down slurry or mixing chemicals	Fluid category 5	Only supply from storage and provide an air gap

Quick fix:

- You can use retaining clips to secure a hose in place to stop it dangling in water or on the ground
- Never leave a hose submerged in a bucket, trough or drain - or lying on the ground

3 Crop sprayers and storage cisterns

You may store water on your premises for a wide range of uses, some involving chemicals. If chemicals are used, the water must be protected by an appropriate backflow prevention device - in most cases this will be an air gap.

If your storage cistern doesn't have a built-in air gap, it can be modified to incorporate one.

Solution:

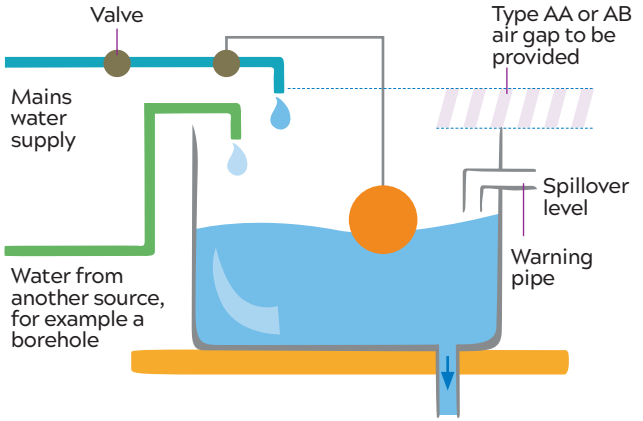
- Cut an overflow in the side of the cistern to prevent the ball valve inlet becoming submerged.

What is an air gap?

An air gap is a visible, unobstructed break in the supply water and stored water. Should a vacuum happen, this prevents anything being drawn back into the drinking water.

4 Boreholes

Does your farm have a borehole installed to provide an alternative source of water?



Many boreholes are only used for irrigation, while others supply water to animals or supply domestic drinking water.

If there is a mains water back up supply, it is illegal to cross connect them directly by any kind of pipework.

If you're thinking of installing a borehole with a mains back-up supply, our Water Regulations Team will offer free advice to ensure you're fully compliant.

5 Rainwater

Take extra care if you've got other systems like rainwater harvesting, grey water re-use or solar water heating systems. You should never directly connect these to your drinking water supply. If you're thinking of installing any of these, get in touch. We can help make sure you're compliant by using the correctly coded pipework and the appropriate air gap.

6 Irrigation

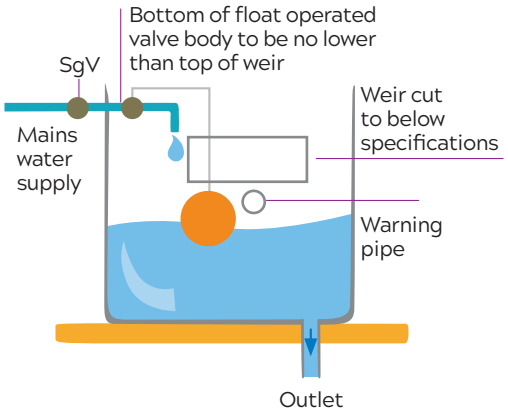
Irrigations systems can be classified anything from fluid 5 down to 4. Please contact your local Regulations Inspector for further advice.

Weir calculator

Weirs for storage cisterns

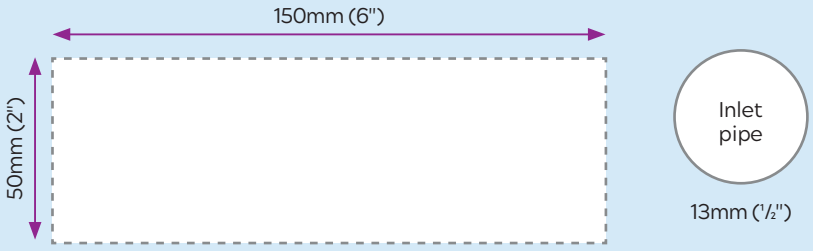
A weir air gap (Type AB) is needed to stop contaminated water mixing with the mains water - it sits directly below the water discharge point. The size of the air gap depends on the size of the supply pipe coming into the cistern.

Find out the internal diameter of the supply pipe and then decide if you'll use an unobstructed weir or one with a mesh over it. All sizes can be found below.



Below is a guide to Weir Dimensions for use in a type 'AB' air gap.

Internal Diameter of Pipe mm (inch)	Width mm (inch) Unobstructed	Width mm (inch) With mesh to stop ingress from insects etc	Depth mm (inch)
13 (½")	150 (6")	360 (14 ¼")	50 (2")
20 (¾")	210 (8 ½")	505 (20")	75 (3")
26 (1")	260 (10 ½")	625 (25")	104 (4")
39 (1 ½")	350 (14")	840 (33 ½")	140 (6")
46 (1 ¾")	400 (16")	960 (38 ½")	165 (6 ½")
52 (2")	500 (20")	1200 (48")	190 (8")
72 (3")	600 (24")	1440 (57 ½")	295 (12")
102 (4")	750 (30")	1800 (72")	370 (14 ¾")



Diagrams not to scale

Plumbing problems

To avoid contaminating your water supply, use suitably approved fixtures and fittings. Not all products you can buy are approved.

We recommend using a member of a water company-approved plumber scheme, under the umbrella of WaterSafe, to install fixtures and fittings. You can find a list on our website: **anglianwater.co.uk/approved-plumber**

Plumbing extensions or alterations?

If you're planning an extension or alteration to any of your plumbing, please let us know. Just like planning permission from your local council, we need to approve any changes to certain fittings and fixtures.

Ask for a Regulation 5 notification form or download it from our website. This form gives us details of your plans - we'll look over them and either approve the work or suggest changes to make sure it complies with the regulations.

We'll then do a free inspection of the work to make sure it's all going to plan. We're here to help you comply with the regulations from the start so you don't have to put anything right later, which could reduce your costs.

Need some help?

You can email a member of our team at **WaterRegulations@anglianwater.co.uk** or give us a call on **0345 600 1063**.

Or visit our website at **anglianwater.co.uk/waterregs**

For general queries about your water and water recycling services, you can contact your retailer.

Further information

You can find lots of useful plumbing tips plus more information about our how our inspections work on our website: **anglianwater.co.uk/waterregs**

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