



Your local supply, on tap

Water Fittings Regulations

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

**FOR COMMERCIAL
CUSTOMERS**

Introduction

The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations are national requirements for the design, installation and maintenance of plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using appliances. This leaflet gives details about the regulations and how they affect Affinity Water's commercial customers, and explains what happens when your premises are inspected.

Why do we need these regulations?

The main reason is to prevent the contamination of drinking water. Faults in your plumbing system could affect the quality of your own and the local drinking water supply, creating a public health risk.

Who is responsible?

You are responsible for installing and maintaining water pipes and fittings – both internal and external – within the boundaries of your property. As these pipes are privately owned, Affinity Water is not responsible for their maintenance. For commercial properties the responsibility may lie with the owner of the property. If you are a tenant you have a responsibility to ensure that water fittings are used appropriately.

Where do the regulations apply?

They apply to all plumbing systems, water fittings and equipment supplied directly or indirectly from a public water supply. This starts from the point where water enters the property's private supply pipe. Premises not connected to a public water supply are not affected.

How do the regulations affect me?

- **Your plumbing system must be installed and maintained to comply with the regulations.**
- **You must prevent contamination of drinking water.**
- **You must give advanced notification of installation work.**

How are they enforced?

The Government requires Affinity Water, as your water supplier, to enforce the regulations. We achieve this by carrying out inspections of new and existing installations to check compliance.

The inspection process



What happens during an inspection?

A regulation technician will visit your property and carry out a thorough inspection of the plumbing system and water fittings. Failures to comply will be noted and explained at the end of the visit. The technician may also carry out a water efficiency audit to highlight any areas where water consumption could be reduced.

If your property appears to comply with the regulations then you will be sent a certificate of compliance for your records.

What are the technicians checking for during the inspection?

The main focus of the inspection is to identify any risks of backflow of contaminated water, which could get into the public water supply. Backflow is the flow of water in the opposite direction to that which is intended and can be caused by either back-pressure or back-siphonage.

What if a breach of the regulations is identified on my property?

Where breaches of the regulations are found we will write to you and give you a period of time to correct them. We will then re-inspect the property or ask you to provide us with evidence of the work, such as a certificate from an approved plumber.

Be aware

It is a criminal offence to breach the regulations and offenders who fail to act to fix failures face prosecution. Affinity Water has successfully secured convictions against offenders, including these examples in 2009:

- A farmer was ordered to pay fines and costs of £4,800 for cross-connecting a private water source into the mains supply and contaminating the drinking water supplied to a tea room.
- Two property development firms were fined £25,000 for contaminating the drinking water of 39 homes.

New installations

What are my responsibilities?

In most cases, before any work starts, the installer or owner/occupier must get our consent by giving advanced notice of the work. This can be done in writing or online at:

www.affinitywater.co.uk/notifications

How do I check that new installations comply?

Anyone who installs plumbing systems or water fittings has the legal duty to ensure that the systems comply with the regulations. If you are carrying out your own installation work, ensure you are aware of the requirements you must meet. If you are employing someone else, consider using an approved plumber who will guarantee compliance of the new installation. Should the certified work be found in breach of the regulations, the legal obligation falls upon the approved plumber not the owner/occupier.

It is not illegal to sell unsuitable fittings and appliances but to install one would be illegal, so check suitability before purchase. The Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) can recommend approved plumbers, has a wide range of approved products and offers advice on compliance.



Visit: www.wras.co.uk

For further information on the regulations please visit:

www.defra.gov.uk/environment
and search for 'water fittings regulations'.



How to get in touch



Website:
www.affinitywater.co.uk/fittings



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**Plumbing must be properly installed
and maintained correctly in order to:**

- protect water quality
- enable access for maintenance and detection of leaks
- ensure safety especially with regards to heating and hot water systems
- protect against damage or freezing – a frozen pipe can lead to a burst pipe.