

# Water Fittings Regulations



## How Northern Ireland Water can help you

Our Water Regulations team is responsible for the enforcement of the Water Regulations and carry out inspections of premises. They can also, upon request, provide advice to anyone seeking information or clarification on any Water Regulation related issue.

Although we cannot provide a design service for plumbing systems, we will be happy to provide information on how you can ensure compliance with the Water Regulations.

The message from the Water Regulations team at NI Water is simple:

'prevention is better than cure'

We want to work with you to ensure that everything is done to protect drinking water supplies in Northern Ireland.

## How to contact us

NI Water aims to provide all customers with a friendly, reliable and professional service.

If you require more information on our Water Regulations please contact us:

Waterline: **08457 440088**

Email: **[waterregulations@niwater.com](mailto:waterregulations@niwater.com)**

**[www.niwater.com](http://www.niwater.com)**

Northern Ireland Water

PO Box 1026

Belfast

BT1 9DJ

Text phone for customers with hearing difficulties **0800 0515 446**.





# Welcome to your Water Regulations explained

Northern Ireland Water (NI Water) provides reliable and cost effective water and waste water services to approximately 800,000 homes and businesses across the whole of Northern Ireland. Working with you, we will continue to improve and develop the range of services that we provide. As part of our service, we have an obligation to explain your responsibilities under the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009, hereafter referred to as Water Regulations.

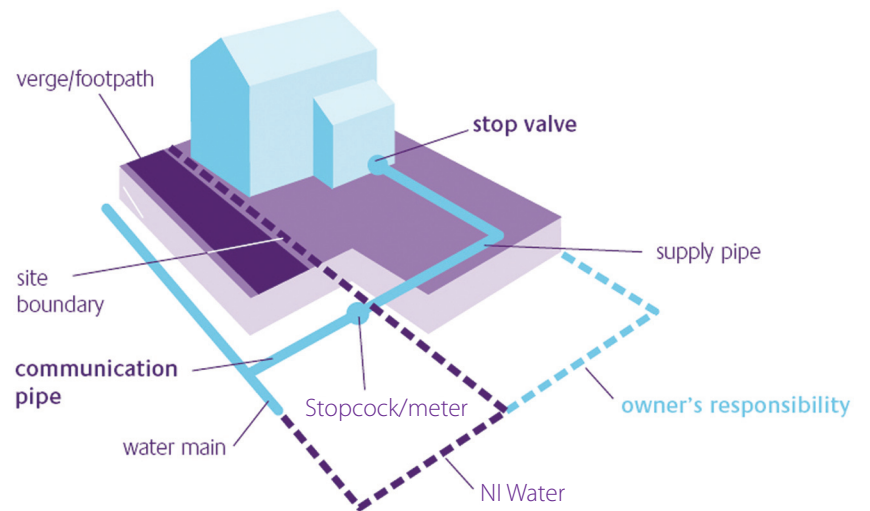
This leaflet will provide you with basic information on what Water Regulations are and what they mean for you and/or your business. Should you need any more detailed information, please call **Waterline** on **08457 440088** and ask to speak to a member of our Water Regulations team.

## What are Water Fittings Regulations?

The Water Fittings Regulations are a statutory rule made by the Department for Regional Development (DRD) setting out 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.

## Where do the Regulations apply?

The Water Regulations apply to **ALL** plumbing systems, water fittings equipment and appliances connected to the public water supply. 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 these Regulations?

Owners and occupiers of premises and anyone who installs plumbing systems or water fittings have a legal duty to ensure the systems satisfy the Regulations. Advance notice must be given of proposed installations in most cases, so architects, building developers and plumbers have to follow the Regulations for future owners, occupiers and users.

## Enforcement

The Department for Regional Development requires NI Water to enforce the Regulations. As with the previous Water Regulations, NI Water will undertake inspections of new and existing installations to check that the requirement of the Regulations are being met.

Where breaches of the Regulations are found, NI Water will require them to be remedied as soon as practicable. In emergencies, NI Water may disconnect the water supply to the premises immediately. It is a **criminal** offence to breach the Regulations and offenders may face prosecution.

# How do the Water Regulations affect you?

Customers should note that compliance with the Water Regulations can protect:

- You and your family, neighbours and local community from illness by preventing contamination of the water supply
- You – from criminal prosecution and potentially a substantial fine
- Your employees – by protecting the drinking water they may consume and therefore their safety in the work place
- Your business – from criminal prosecution, adverse publicity and potentially substantial fines

As a customer you also need to ensure that your whole plumbing system is correctly installed and maintained to comply with the Water Regulations. You must take measures to prevent the contamination of drinking water and give advance notification of any installation work to NI Water, prior to starting any work.



## 1. Plumbing systems to comply

Plumbing systems must be designed, installed and maintained to meet the Regulations' requirements. Plumbing materials and fittings must be of a suitable standard. It is not illegal to sell or purchase unsuitable fittings and appliances but to install one would be illegal, so check suitability before you purchase. All the plumbing fittings and materials that you use must meet the requirements of the Water Regulations and therefore must have the relevant UK or EU approval. A list of approved fittings can be found on the **'Water Fittings and Materials Directory'** published by the **Water Regulations Advisory Service (WRAS)**. This directory can be viewed free of charge at [www.wras.co.uk](http://www.wras.co.uk)

Plumbing systems must be properly installed and maintained to protect water quality, to ensure safety, ease of access for maintenance, detection of leakage, protection against damage or freezing etc.

If you are carrying out your own installation, ensure you know what requirements you must meet. If you are employing someone else, consider using a licensed plumber who will guarantee compliance with the Regulations and assume liability for the installation.

## 2. Prevention of 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. The Regulations define Fluid Risk categories by the type of contaminants which are present and specify the appropriate type of prevention device which must be fitted to guard against backflow.

## 3. Advanced notification

In most cases, before you start work on the installation or undertake any changes to your water system, you as the owner, occupier or installer must get approval from NI Water by giving advance notice of the work. This is done by giving us advance notice in writing of your intentions (please see the 'How to Contact Us' section at the end of this leaflet). However, in many cases, the use of licensed plumbers means that you are not required to give advance notification direct to NI Water.

The following list provides some examples of work that must not commence without obtaining prior approval; please refer to Regulation 5 of the Regulations for the full list of notifiable items:

- The erection of any new building or structure (domestic or non-domestic)
- The extension or alteration of the water system in any premises except a domestic dwelling
- The material change in use of any premises
- **The installation of:**
  - A bidet with an ascending spray
  - Grey water, recycled water, reclaimed water and rainwater harvesting systems
  - Water systems for fire fighting including domestic sprinkler systems
  - A bath with a capacity greater than 230 litres
- A pump or booster drawing more than 12 litres per minute
- A reduced pressure zone (RPZ) valve or other mechanical device
- A reverse osmosis unit
- A garden watering system unless designed to be hand operated
- Any water system laid outside a building and either less than 750 mm or more than 1350 mm below ground level
- Construction of an automatically replenished pond or swimming pool of more than 10,000 litres

NI Water cannot 'unreasonably' withhold consent for your work but it may be granted subject to conditions, which must be followed. If you do not hear from us within 10 working days of writing to us, consent is 'deemed' to have been given and you can proceed with the work. This does not alter the obligation upon the installer and owner or occupier to ensure that the Regulations are fully complied with.

#### 4. Licensed Plumbers and Contractors

We would always recommend the use of licensed plumbers. A licensed plumber will certify that his or her work meets the requirements of the Water Regulations. If any breaches are subsequently found in the certified work, the legal responsibility would fall upon the plumber and not you, as the owner or occupier.

NI Water recommends the use of professional plumbers and plumbing contractors who are members of a recognised national licensing scheme. There are a number of benefits in using members of such schemes:

- Their work is certified as complying with the Water Regulations
- Properly trained and qualified personnel are available
- Members are audited and inspected on a regular basis
- They hold public liability insurance
- They must submit financial integrity statements annually
- Should any dispute arise, 'Complaints Resolution Procedures' are in place and are further enhanced by an Independent Complaints Panel

NI Water supports and promotes the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbers Employers Federations (S.N.I.P.E.F) **Plumbing Industry Licensing Scheme.**

Please call SNIPEF directly on 0845 224 0391 and they will be able to recommend a licensed plumbing business in your area. Alternatively, details of their members can also be found on their website [www.needaplumber.org](http://www.needaplumber.org) or by writing to them at SNIPEF Bellevue House, 22 Annandale Street, Edinburgh, EH7 4GN.

We also support the National Water Industry Approved Plumbers Scheme (WIAPS). For full details of the Scheme and to obtain a list of registered plumbers please visit [www.wras.co.uk/plumber\\_scheme/](http://www.wras.co.uk/plumber_scheme/)

