

Information note on Regulation 3 (Wales)



Scope (Regulation 3)

Regulation 3 of the Private Water Supplies (Wales) Regulations 2017 (the Regulations) specifies the criteria which determine the extent to which the Regulations apply in relation to private water supplies.

A private supply is defined in Section 93 of the Water Industry Act 1991 as “a supply of water provided otherwise than a water undertaker (including a supply provided for the purposes of the bottling of water).” The Regulations specify 4 private supply categories, as follows, each denoted by its respective regulation (see relevant information note for each regulation):

- Further distribution of supplies from water undertakers or licensed suppliers (Regulation 8 supplies);
- Large supplies (>10m³/day) and supplies to premises where it is used as part of a commercial or public activity (Regulation 9 supplies);
- Supplies to a single dwelling (Regulation 10 supplies);
- Other private water supplies including supplies as part of a domestic tenancy (Regulation 11 supplies)

It should be noted that although Regulation 8 supplies originate from a public supply, by definition, consumers of these supplies are not on water companies' billing records as customers and therefore water is not being provided by a statutory water undertaker directly to the user. Further guidance on what constitutes a Regulation 8 supply can be obtained from the Inspectorate's Information Note on Regulation 8.

The Regulations apply to private water supplies ONLY where the water is intended for human consumption. Regulation 3 describes human consumption as:

- a) all water either in its original state or after treatment, intended for drinking, cooking, food preparation or other domestic purposes*, regardless of its origin and whether it is supplied from a distribution network, from a tanker, or in bottles or containers.

*The term 'domestic purposes' in relation to a supply of water to premises is defined in section 218 of the Water Industry Act 1991 as drinking, washing, cooking, central heating and sanitary purposes. 'Sanitary purposes' includes washing/bathing/showering, laundry and toilet flushing. The Inspectorate has made available on its website a risk assessment tool for supplies that are used exclusively for the purposes of toilet flushing.

All water used in any food-production undertaking for the manufacture, processing, preservation or marketing of products or substances intended for human consumption unless the competent authority (in this case the FSA) are

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satisfied that the quality of water cannot affect the wholesomeness of the foodstuff in its finished form.

For further information see:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/enforcework/food-law/guidance-enforcement/private-water-supply-guidance>

The FSA states that clean water may be used in primary food production. Clean water is defined as “clean seawater and fresh water of a similar quality” and clean seawater is defined as “natural, artificial or purified seawater or brackish water that does not contain micro-organisms, harmful substances or toxic marine plankton in quantities capable of directly or indirectly affecting the health quality of food”. Some degree of risk assessment and/or monitoring is necessary to satisfy the regulator that clean water is clean. The document may be found here:

If water is used for anything other than primary food production then it must satisfy PWS Regulations. Examples of where the PWS Regulations apply are given below (this list is illustrative and is not exhaustive):

- The washing and bagging of crops/foodstuffs (particularly the washing of ready to eat items such as salad crops (e.g. lettuce, watercress and spring onions),
- fruit (such as eating apples, pears and plums) and vegetables that may be eaten raw.
- Washing of fruit and vegetables intended for peeling and slicing;
- Incorporation into food as an ingredient (including drinks or water used in a brewery – see ‘Malting and brewing’ below for further information);
- Cleaning of food production equipment, utensils, walls, floor, ceilings and work surfaces.
- Production of ice.
- Hand washing of food handlers.
- Cleaning purposes (food contact surfaces, equipment, storage containers, utensils, hands).
- Egg washing if the water is deemed by the FSA to affect the final product. Class A (highest grade) eggs are not permitted to be washed and therefore this regulation is not applicable. However the Regulations may apply where the water is used to wash class B and C eggs and would depend on where the eggs are washed. If carried out at the farm/place of production, then egg washing is not within scope of the regulations, as washing would not substantially alter the nature of the egg. However washing carried out at the processing plant (for B and C eggs) would not be a primary production process, and the water would have to be wholesome and therefore would be within scope of the Regulations.

Local authorities should consult with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) if further advice is needed on the quality of water used for any food production.

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Milking parlours

The Food Standards Agency has powers and responsibilities for milking parlours and dairy farms under existing food law. Private supplies that are used solely for washing down purposes are not within the scope of the PWS Regulations. If however the milking parlour premises comprise a single domestic dwelling, where the water is used for domestic purposes, the single domestic dwelling is subject to Regulation 10 (2) of the Regulations. Where there is more than one dwelling on the premises, Regulation 10(1) and (2) or Regulation 9 must be applied as appropriate, subject to the conditions specified in those Regulations.

Distilleries

Where water from private water supplies is used in the manufacturing of products that employ a distillation process (for example, whisky, gin and other spirits), the Regulations apply only where the water is added after the distillation part of the process, because the distillation process ensures that only certain compounds are present in the distillate.

Malting and brewing

Malt is made by a process known as steeping and is a product used in brewing and the manufacture of other products, such as vinegar. The process of making malt allows water to be absorbed by barley and the product becomes an ingredient in the final product. Therefore water derived from private water supplies to make malt by this process, fall within the scope of Regulation 3 (1) (b) of The Regulations of The Regulations.

Water derived from private water supplies that are used specifically for brewing beer where the water is a constituent of the end product, fall within the scope of Regulation 3 (1) (b).

Rainwater harvesting and grey water systems

All supplies that are derived from rainwater and recycled (grey) water fall within the scope of the Regulations, where the water is supplied for domestic purposes, as defined in the Water Industry Act 1991.

Where such supplies are not used in the context of human consumption as described in 3 of the Regulations, they must be recorded.

Water fountains

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Where a supply of drinking water derived from a private supply that is offered for human consumption to the general public/tourists as part of a heritage attraction (e.g. ancient springs and grottos), Regulation 9 applies. Where it is not intended for human consumption suitable signage should be appended to the feature by the relevant person to deter public consumption of the water.

Alternative supplies

In an emergency (for example when there is a quality failure or a problem with the source or a failure of treatment or a potential danger to human health, it may be necessary to temporarily supply water from tankers or in bottles or other containers such as cartons (see Technical Note on Provision of alternative supplies in emergency and non emergency situations).

<http://www.dwi.gov.uk/stakeholders/guidance-and-codes-of-practice/pws-alt-supplies.pdf>

The water in the tankers must also meet the requirements of the Regulations. If water in bottles or containers is supplied instead of a private supply (due to insufficiency) and that water is not offered for sale (these are controlled by the Natural Mineral Water, Spring Water and Bottled Drinking Water (Wales) Regulations) 2015 then it is controlled by the 2017 Private Water Supply Regulations.

Temporary events

Where temporary events (festivals, local fairs etc.) are supplied by sources such as boreholes and/or springs for domestic purposes, the Private Water Supply Regulations apply. Water that is consumed for domestic purposes at a temporary event that is derived from a public water supply – either directly through pipes or via tankers is not within the scope of the Regulations unless it is a Regulation 8 supply.

Supplies to tenanted premises

Private water supplies to all premises, including those serving single dwellings, which are rented as part of a domestic tenancy agreement, where the water supplied is intended for human consumption (including water used for sanitary purposes (e.g. toilet flushing), which is defined as a domestic purpose) are within scope of the Regulations (Regulation 11). These supplies must be monitored in accordance with Regulation 7 and 11. Further information regarding the risk assessment of these supplies can be found in the Information note for regulation 6. Regulation 11 supplies include bed and breakfast

Exemptions (Regulation 3)

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The following waters are exempt from the Regulations – that is they are not controlled by the Regulations:

- a) water controlled by the Natural Mineral Water, Spring Water and Bottled Drinking Water (Wales) Regulations 2007; or
- b) water that is a medicinal product; or
- c) water used solely for washing a crop after it has been harvested where it does not affect the fitness for human consumption of the crop or of any food or drink derived from the crop.

Water that is a medicinal product is water that is regulated by the Medicines Act 1968(1).