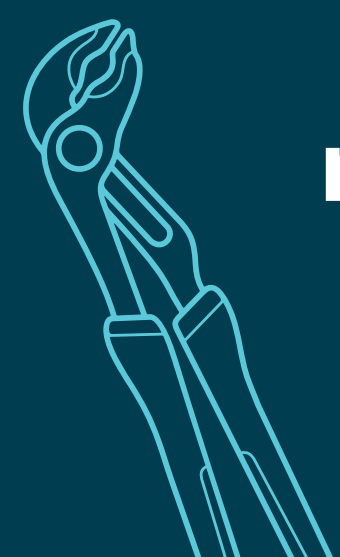




What are the water fittings regulations?



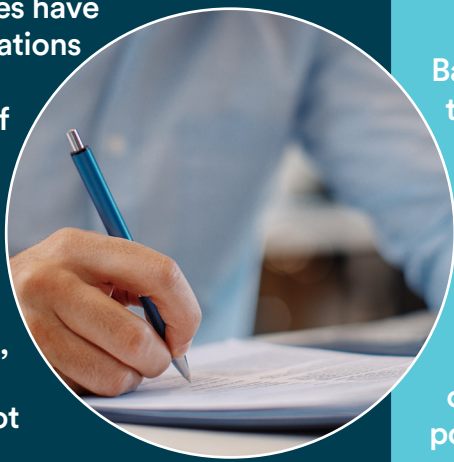
What are they for?



In 1999 the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations were introduced by the Government to protect public health by safeguarding the public drinking water supply. Their purpose, most importantly is to prevent contamination, but they also work to prevent water misuse, undue consumption, erroneous measurement and waste. The Regulations apply from the point where the mains water supply enters a property's boundary up to the point where the water is used.

Enforcement

United Utilities, like all water companies have a legal obligation to enforce the Regulations in their area of supply. We do this by carrying out compliance inspections of plumbing installations, both new and old, that receive a water supply from us. We want all of our customers to be safe and confident with the water they use, so where we identify things aren't quite right we will issue a notice, explaining what you need to do to put things right, and how long you have got to get the work done.



In the most serious of cases we can legally disconnect water supplies to protect public health.



Did you know?
It is actually a criminal offence to breach the regulations and offenders may face prosecution.

Are you looking to design and/or install a new plumbing system?

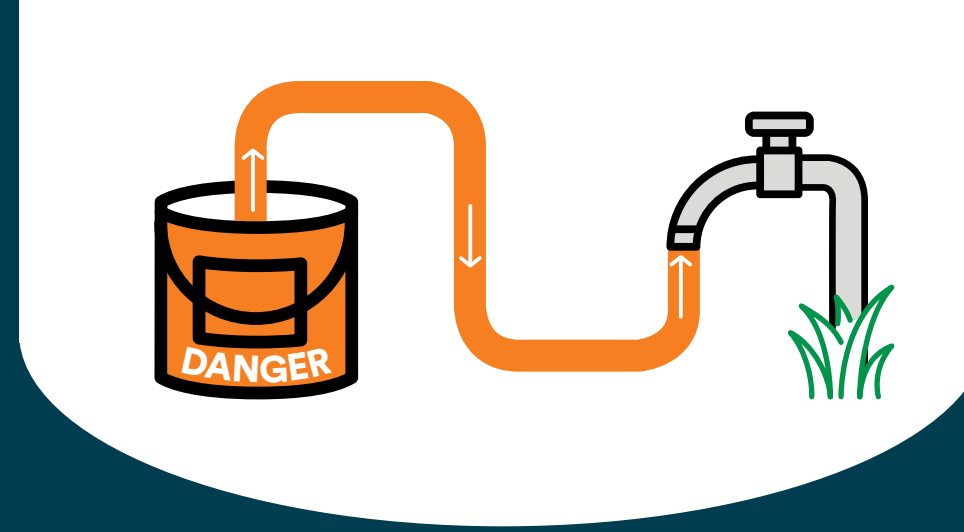
The Regulations also cover the design, installation, operation and maintenance of a plumbing system including the fittings and appliances used.

When a plumbing system is properly installed and maintained it:

- protects water quality by preventing contamination
- enables access for maintenance
- ensures safety, especially with regards to heating and hot water systems
- protects against damage or freezing (a frozen pipe can lead to a burst pipe)

Backflow is where the water flows back towards the supply source, either by siphonic action (backsiphonage) or forced back under pressure (backpressure). This could be from taps, hoses or other water carrying equipment.

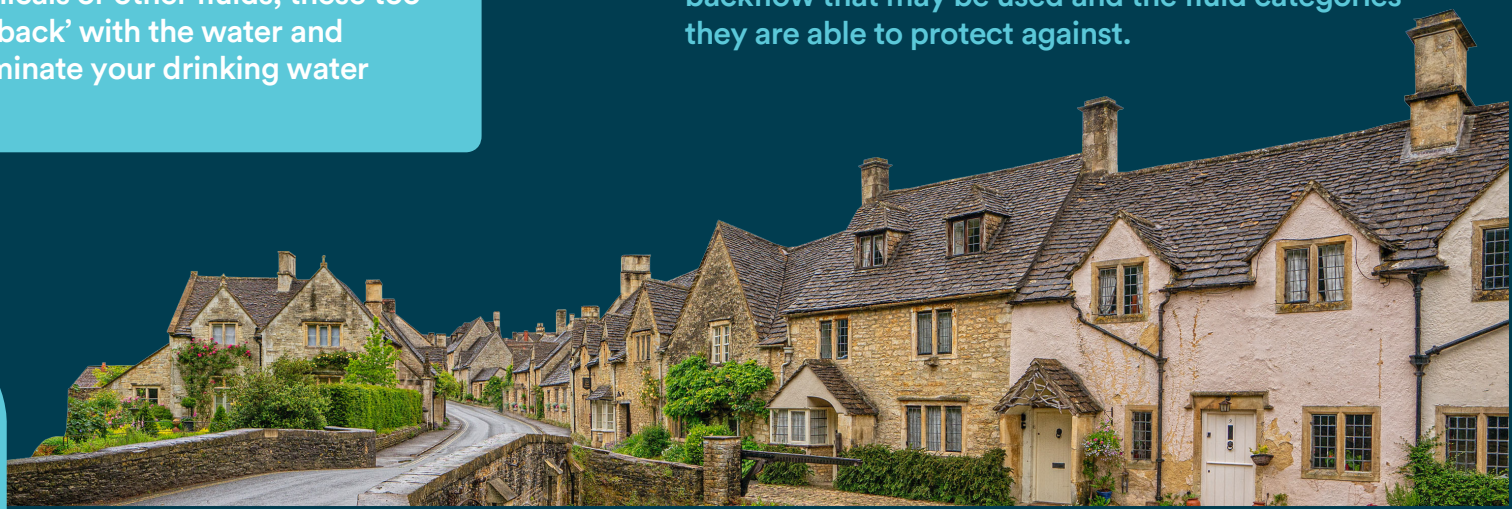
Where water comes into contact with materials, chemicals or other fluids, these too could be 'pulled back' with the water and potentially contaminate your drinking water system.



Whatever the potential source of contamination, the water we supply to our customers must be protected.

For this reason the Regulations require adequate protection to be built in and/or installed to prevent backflow from occurring. The Regulations place potential contaminants and substances into one of five fluid categories dependent on the harm it may cause.

It also specifies the types of devices for preventing backflow that may be used and the fluid categories they are able to protect against.



The five fluid categories

There are five fluid categories in which water and fluids can sit. Below is a list of the fluids and the types of backflow prevention devices that can be used to prevent backflow.



Fluid category	Description	Example	Prevention (examples)
1	Wholesome water supplied by your water company	United Utilities	None needed
2	Water with a slight change of temperature, taste or odour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ice machine Fire sprinkler systems (without antifreeze) Water cooled air conditioning units (without additives) 	Single Check Valve (Type EA)
3	Fluid which represents a slight health hazard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drink vending machines in which ingredients or carbon dioxide are injected Washbasins, baths, showers Commercial water softeners 	Double Check Valve (Type EC)
4	Fluid which represents a significant health hazard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dairies Food preparation Brewery and distillation plant Commercial boiler top-up system 	RPZ Valve (Type BA device)
5	Fluid which represents a serious health hazard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grey Water recycling systems Medical or dental equipment Vegetable washing Sewage treatment, including sewer and drain cleaning Water for agricultural use Commercial washing machines 	AA or AB Air Gap



Notification of changes, alterations and change of use

As part of the Regulations you are required to notify the Water Undertaker of any proposed changes or alterations to your plumbing or any material change of use of any premises or part of the premises.

This applies to water system installations in connection with any of the following:

- The erection of any new building or structure.
- The extension or alteration of the water system in any premises except a domestic dwelling.
- The material change of use of any premises
- The installation of:
 - A bath larger than 230 litres (measured to the centre of the overflow);
 - A bidet with an ascending spray or flexible hose;
 - A shower unit of a type specified by the Regulator (none are currently specified);
 - A pump or booster drawing more than 12 litres per minute
 - A reverse osmosis unit;
 - A water treatment unit producing a waste water discharge or requiring water for regeneration or cleaning;
 - A reduced pressure zone (RPZ) valve or other mechanical device for protection against backflow in fluid category 4 or 5;
 - A garden watering system unless designed to be handoperated;
 - Any water system laid outside a building and either less than 750mm or more than 1350mm below ground level;
- Construction of an automatically-replenished pond or swimming pool of more than 10,000 litres.

Notifications should be in writing by using the Regulation 5 form that can be found at: www.unitedutilities.co.uk

Watersafe and Approved Plumbers

To ensure that any work is done properly it is recommended that you use a professionally qualified plumber for any plumbing work. When you are looking for a plumber select a business that is a member of an Approved Contractors' Scheme, such as WaterSafe.

WaterSafe is a dedicated online search facility bringing together thousands of qualified contractors employed by plumbing businesses from seven existing Approved Contractors' Schemes across the UK. These schemes aim to raise plumbing standards by helping customers find the nearest qualified plumbing and heating professionals. To search for a plumbing business near you visit: watersafe.org.uk and enter your postcode.

Members of Approved Plumbers schemes have a recognised plumbing qualification and knowledge. They give their customers legally recognised certificates, confirming that the plumbing work they have carried out complies with The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations and Byelaws. All members of the WaterSafe Contractors' Scheme carry agreed levels of Public Liability Insurance and operate a customer complaints scheme.

To ensure that members continue to provide excellent service, approved contractor schemes not only investigate any technical complaints from customers but also regularly audit members' workmanship to make certain that it meets the requirements of The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations and Byelaws. The seven Approved Contractors' Schemes that form part of WaterSafe are:

- The "Water Industry Approved Plumbing Scheme" (WIAPS) administered by WRAS,
- "Aplus" administered by AWG Limited,
- "TAPS" administered by Thames Water Utilities Limited,
- "Water Mark" administered by Severn Trent Water Limited,
- Water regulation approved contractor or person schemes administered by SNIPEF Management Limited, the Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors Limited (APHC) and the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering (CIPHE).

To contact an Approved Plumber, look on the websites of the organisation which runs the scheme, or search the WaterSafe website. The seven Approved Contractors' schemes also run specialist sector schemes for ground workers, underground workers or external services. These professions are qualified for external work only such as leakage detection or service pipe repairs and renewals.