



MALDON DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Environment Services

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION
ABOUT YOUR
PRIVATE DRINKING WATER SUPPLY**

Why you should read this guide

This guide has been produced by to help you understand what your own duties and responsibilities are regarding your Private Water Supply. It is also intended to provide brief advice about the potential dangers if you do not do anything to keep the supply serviced and maintained. In all cases you should consult a professional water engineer before installing equipment to ensure that the equipment is correct and right for your requirements.

Please read this and keep it somewhere safe as it contains information that you may need to refer to in the future.

This important guide explains:-

- Classes of Private Water Supplies (Single Private Dwelling, Small, Large, Commercial and Public)
- Finding out information about the supply
- Responsibility for the supply
- Maintenance of the supply
- Risk Assessments
- What is Maldon District Council's duty to my Private Water Supply?
- What does the Council look for in Private Water Samples?
- What happens if results of sampling and analysis show that the concentrations are above the values in the Regulations?
- Bacteria
- Nitrate
- Other Contaminants
- Informative Documents
- Useful Contact Details

Classes of Private Water Supplies

Single Private Dwelling

Supplies classed as 'Single Private Dwellings' have a private water supply such as a Well or Borehole which serves only one domestic property. This property must not be used for any commercial activity such as a holiday let unless you inform us of this use. Under the Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009 properties of this class will not be routinely sampled by Suffolk Coastal District Council, unless we are requested to do so by the Landlord. In these circumstances, this service will incur a charge. If however you are concerned about your water and would like it to be sampled, you can contact us or a private laboratory. Again, this service will incur a charge.

Small Supply

Small supplies include any Private Water Supply that provides less than 10m³/day (or serve less than 50 persons) to two or more properties. For example; two properties sharing the same Well would be classed as a small supply.

Large Supply

Where a Private Water Supply used for domestic purposes and for a commercial activity such as a (for example) bed and breakfast, this will be classed as a large supply for the purposes of the Private Water Supply Regulations.

Commercial Supply

Commercial supplies are premises in which food is produced including hotels, restaurants and cafes, and similar establishments, bed and breakfast establishments and facilities in which food is manufactured or processed. Any other premises used for commercial activity (Including Holiday Lets and Caravan Sites) are considered to be commercial premises.

Supplies to public premises

Supplies to public premises include the following; nursery, infant, junior, primary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, nursing homes, medical clinics, hospitals; village halls, church halls, libraries and restaurants, cafes and any other similar establishments considered to be providing water to the Public by means of a Private Water Supply.

Finding information out about the supply

If your drinking water is not supplied by a water company such as Essex & Suffolk Water, then your property is likely to be supplied water by a Private Water Supply.

Your private water supply may be a Well, Borehole or a Spring. The water may then be pumped to a header tank or pressure vessel to provide adequate pressure to supply your property. The water will then be distributed throughout your property to the taps. If you do not know how your distribution system works we would strongly advise that you find out, as this knowledge may assist you if the supply fails or in the event that a problem occurs. You may wish to contact a plumber or water engineer to assist you and carry out a survey of your distribution system. Details of suitable companies can be found in the Yellow Pages under Pumps and Pumping Equipment.

Responsibility for the supply

If the supply serves only your property and you own the property, then you are responsible for the maintenance of the supply. If the Private Water Supply is shared with other properties, it may be that there is a legal agreement in the deeds to your property, setting out who is responsible for maintenance for the supply. There may also be information as to which other properties share the Private Water Supply. It may be that all properties supplied share joint and equal responsibility for the Private Water Supply, or there may be one person or company who is responsible for the supply and its maintenance.

If you are a tenant you may wish to check your tenancy agreement or contact your landlord or management company to find out who has the responsibility for maintaining the supply and dealing with any deficiencies.

Maintenance of the supply

As with any other system in your property, your private water supply will require periodic maintenance and cleansing. This will include maintenance of any pumps to ensure that the supply is not cut off, maintenance to the source itself, the distribution system (such as any tanks) for prevention of contamination, water treatment equipment (where present) and finally to the taps themselves. You should also periodically cleanse and disinfect any storage tanks as you would food preparation surfaces to prevent the build-up of bacteria.

It will be useful to inspect the individual parts of the system at regular intervals to ensure there are no obvious defects, such as:

- Missing, damaged or ill-fitting covers to the well/borehole or spring which may allow contaminated surface water or animals into the source.
- Penetration of the source by plant roots, insects or animals- this is mainly in the case of wells.
- Anything situated on or near the water source which may find its way into the supply, for example via surface run-off.
- Damaged pumps and pipe-work.
- Missing, damaged or ill-fitting covers to any storage tanks which may allow birds, insects, animals, other foreign materials or sediment into the storage tanks

- Water treatment equipment should be checked to ensure they are working and serviced/maintained as recommended in the manufacturers' instructions.

Any defects should be attended to and repaired as soon as possible to prevent failure or contamination of your water supply, which may endanger the health of consumers of the water.

N.B If your private water supply needs maintenance we recommend that you drink bottled water or water from another source to reduce the risk of illness while waiting for repairs to be carried out and the system to be cleansed.

Risk Assessments

Each supply which serves more than one property, or provides water to a commercial or public building (including a holiday let) will require, by law a Risk Assessment by Maldon District Council by the end of December 2015. The Risk Assessments were undertaken in 2011 by a contractor employed on behalf of the Council. Risk Assessments are mandatory and chargeable to the owners of the properties risk assessed. The regulations require risk assessment's to be reviewed and where appropriate updated every 5 years. The risk assessment will therefore be reviewed in 2016. We will contact owners in advance to advise them of the reassessment of the Risk Assessments.

What is Maldon District Council's duty to my Private Water Supply?

The Council has a legal duty to keep themselves informed about the wholesomeness and sufficiency of Private Water Supplies provided to premises in their area, and to sample certain supplies in accordance with the Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009.

Properties served by a Private Water supply will be sampled in accordance with the findings of a Risk Assessment of the supply.

Those supplies serving only one property will only be sampled at the request of the Owner or Occupier of the property served by the Private Water Supply, and this will incur a charge.

If you require sampling and analysis to be carried out for your own information, in addition to the routine sampling required by the Regulations, then this can be arranged for a fee. However, you may wish to consider the services of an independent laboratory.

What does the Council look for in water samples?

Sampling is carried out to ensure that the quality of the water is wholesome and that the concentrations comply with the current Regulations. The Regulations state what the maximum concentrations are for parameters which may be sampled. A list of the Parameters can be found in the Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009.

What happens if results of sampling and analysis show that the concentrations are above the values in the Regulations?

If a parameter exceeds the maximum concentration as defined in the Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009, the owner and/ or occupier will be provided with information about the failure to meet the regulations. We will also do our best to advise you about the sort of equipment or remedy which is needed. However, the onus is on the owner of the property to determine which action to take.

If suitable remedial action is not taken and the results of sampling continue to show a problem, the Council must take formal action, using legal notices, on the owner of the property to require them to take remedial action to protect current and future users.

These notices are revealed in any search carried out by prospective buyers if the property is to be sold, so that the new owner can be made aware of the problems with the supply. The notice will provide a timescale for works to be undertaken in order to remedy the supply and ensure that it meets the concentrations prescribed for by the Regulations.

Depending on whether the problem is due to bacteria, or to chemical parameters, it may be caused by defects in the system, as described earlier in this leaflet, and repair of the defect together with cleansing and disinfecting of the system may be the answer.

However there are some problems e.g. high concentrations of chemicals such as nitrate, which may be from the water source itself, and require installation of specialised water treatment equipment, such as filtration units to reduce or remove the contaminants. It is recommended that a Water Treatment Company be employed to fit such equipment. Alternatively, if you decide not to fit filtration equipment it may be possible to have your property connected to the public mains water supply. In these circumstances you should contact your local water provider, Essex and Suffolk Water, whose current Telephone numbers can be found on the back page of this leaflet.

Bacteria

The current Regulations state that Coliform bacteria should not be present in your drinking water. The presence of Faecal Coliforms (E. coli) indicates that your private water supply is contaminated with human or animal faecal matter (or even decaying animal matter) and urgent action should be taken to remove the contamination.

The regulations also state that Enterococci should not be present in your drinking water. Consumers of water with bacterial contamination are directly exposed to the risk of gastrointestinal illnesses or other serious waterborne diseases.

Bacterial contamination may be removed by fixing any defects to the distribution system and cleansing the system as previously mentioned. In addition you may wish to fit suitable water treatment equipment to remove any bacterial contamination from the water. The most common equipment used for domestic supplies is an Ultra Violet (UV) light treatment unit. Ultra Violet filtration systems should be fitted to the supply at a point in your distribution system that treats the **whole** house and therefore all water used for drinking, food preparation and even brushing teeth is treated to maximise protection. Where possible, the UV light treatment unit should be fitted after any storage tanks. This will reduce the possibility of any bacterial contamination entering the supply system after the UV light treatment unit.

Should you wish to fit an Ultra Violet light treatment unit you should contact a qualified Water Treatment Company to fit this equipment.

N.B the council strongly recommends that all private water supplies be treated by water treatment equipment to remove/destroy bacteria. Any sampling and analysis carried out on the supply only provides an indicator of the water quality on that day and at that time. Water quality may vary before and after the sampling and analysis was carried out, contamination may occur at anytime.

Fluoride

The groundwater in some of the coastal areas of the district contains elevated levels of fluoride. These levels are in some cases are at levels (in combination with fluoride from other sources) likely to pose a risk of health effects such as fluorosis of the teeth and bones when ingested over long periods.

Fluoride levels can be reduced by installing appropriate filtration equipment. Fluoride only poses a risk when used for drinking and cooking purposes. There is no risk when used for washing and bathing, therefore, filtration does not need to cover all points of the house, filtration to a single tap (usually located in the kitchen) is acceptable.

The most efficient form of Filtration of fluoride at this time is from a Reverse Osmosis (RO) filter system. RO systems also remove minerals such as calcium from the water. Most people should be able to get all the minerals they need by eating a varied and balanced diet and a decrease in the mineral content of your water should not, therefore, cause deficiencies in your daily mineral intake if you eat a healthy balanced diet. If you would like more information on nutrition and balanced diet the following contacts will be able to help:

The Food Standards Agency website - this is very informative and can be viewed at www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating

The Department of Health website - this provides recently published information on diet related topics and can be viewed at www.dh.gov.uk

There are a number of different makes and models of Nitrate filter. If you should need to install a filter, or would like to install one for your own peace of mind, you should contact a qualified Water Treatment Company for advice on the right equipment. Water Engineers who can install filters can be found in the Yellow Pages under 'Pumps and Pumping Equipment'

Other contaminants

Iron, Manganese, Turbidity (A measure of how clear your water is), Chloride and Sodium (both Chloride and sodium are an indication of salt intrusion, usually found near to the Blackwater and Crouch estuaries) may be found at levels above those stated in the Regulations. Where these parameters are found in high levels they can reduce the effectiveness of bacterial water treatment equipment, encourage bacterial growth, and the water can be discoloured which may cause staining of your laundry. Water treatment equipment is available for these contaminants.

You may find that your private water supply leaves a blue residue in your kettle and bath. This can be caused by increased concentrations of copper in the water, which may be from copper pipes, hot water tanks and boilers that are becoming worn more quickly than normal. There is water treatment equipment available that may help with this problem.

Useful Contact Details

If you wish to discuss any matters raised in this leaflet please contact the **Environmental Health Team**. You can write to us at:

Maldon District Council Offices
Princes Road
Maldon
CM9 5DL

Or you can telephone, email or visit our website at:

(01621) 854477

environmentservices.request@maldon.gov.uk

www.maldon.gov.uk

Other telephone numbers you may find useful

Anglian Water: 08457 145 145

Essex and Suffolk Water: 0845 782 0111

Other websites you may find useful

Drinking Water Inspectorate: www.dwi.gov.uk

Anglian water: www.anglianwater.co.uk

Essex & Suffolk Water: www.eswater.co.uk

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health: www.cieh.org