Ribble Valley
Borough Council
www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

GUIDANCE ON THE PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES REGULATIONS

Private Water Supplies

A private water supply is any water supply which is not provided by a water utility company. The source of the supply may come from:

- wells
- boreholes
- springs
- rivers or streams
- lakes or ponds

The supply may serve just one property or several properties through a network of pipes.

Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 (as amended)

The Private Water Supplies Regulations were introduced in January 2010 and require local councils to undertake a risk assessment and sampling programme of all private supplies in their area. This is to ensure that private water supplies meet the same quality standards as mains water. The Council charges for this work (please refer to the charges table on the back page).

Risk assessment is a proactive approach identifying potential hazards to human health. The information analysed in the assessment is recorded in a report specific to your private water supply. It allows action to be taken to manage risks through a multi-barrier approach, involving

source protection, treatment of the source water and management of the distribution network to prevent contaminants entering the supply system.

One of the most important changes introduced by the amendment regulations is a requirement for local authorities to regulate private supplies that serve individual rented properties (unless the lease specifically says that the tenant has full responsibility for the whole water supply). This will require the supply to be sampled annually, and a risk-assessment to be undertaken every 5 years.

Single-property supplies that serve an owner-occupied dwelling will only be risk assessed and sampled upon request of the owner.

Risk Assessments

The regulations require each supply (excluding owner-occupied single dwellings) to undergo a risk assessment every five years, to determine how regularly the supply needs to be tested and for which parameters (i.e. which types of bacteria, chemicals etc). This involves surveying the supply, from the source through to point-of-use, to identify factors that could lead to contamination of the supply. Factors influencing sampling requirements include the type of source (borehole, well etc), how well it is protected, the treatment methods in place, the number of people served by the supply and the intended use of the water.

Risk assessments are normally carried out by prior appointment. This is to ensure that the owner or occupier can arrange access to the various parts of the water system, arrange for someone with detailed knowledge of the system to attend, and generally reduce the amount of time we are required to be on site, thereby also reducing the cost.

Sampling

Samples from private water supplies will normally be taken from a consumer's kitchen tap and then sent for analysis at an accredited and approved laboratory. The sampling frequency and the extent of analysis required will depend on the supply classification, and the results of the risk assessment.

Large supplies (Regulation 9)

-those supplies which supply water as part of a **commercial or public activity**, eg bed and breakfast accommodation, restaurant, caravan site, tenanted dwelling.
-those supplies which supply an average daily volume of water of 10 m^3 or more for **domestic purposes (serving approximately 50 or more persons).**

Large supplies must be sampled at least once a year for a comprehensive range of parameters and the number of samples taken is determined by the volume of water used. After three years of sampling, the range of parameters can be reduced if the results indicate it is safe to do so.

Small domestic supplies (Regulation 10)

-shared domestic supplies (using less than 10 m^3 water per day and **serving less than 50 persons**) are monitored at least once every five years for a reduced set of parameters. However, the number of samples taken and the parameters tested may increase if it is shown to be necessary by the risk assessment.

Investigations

Any sample that fails to meet the prescribed concentrations laid out in the Private Water Supplies Regulations must have an investigation to determine the reason for the failure and to identify what action is needed to improve the supply. This may mean further sampling being conducted at the source, holding tanks and/or other parts of the infrastructure to assist the investigation. In complex cases, it may be necessary to engage a specialist water engineer.

If a wholesome supply cannot be achieved through implementing physical changes to the supply network, the water will require treatment before use. A wide range of treatment options are available.

Notices

In the event of failure, where a supply is found to be 'unwholesome' or a 'risk to human health', a notice will be served on any **relevant person** either prohibiting or restricting the supply, as appropriate. The notice will also specify what corrective action must be taken in order to safeguard human health and restore the wholesomeness of the supply.

A relevant person may include:- all users of the supply; owners of tenanted properties; any relevant landowners and any person who exercises powers of management for the supply.

The notice will be specific for each supply and can be appealed against in a Magistrate's Court and/or by appeal to the Secretary of State, but the notice will remain in force until either it has been complied with or it is suspended by the courts/Secretary of State

Charges

The Council will charge the costs of carrying out their duties under these regulations to those responsible for the supply. Where part of a shared supply is used by some commercial activity, e.g. bed and breakfast, pub, camp site, the charges may be divided between the commercial and non-commercial properties proportionally. Lab test fees are the charges made by the accredited testing laboratory and reflect the increased number of parameters that must be checked.

A breakdown of the council's charges in respect of private water supplies is shown on the last page. These charges are subject to change on an annual basis.

Persons liable to pay

Any person requesting a local authority to carry out any of the activities specified in the Table below is liable for the cost.

Otherwise, fees are payable as specified in the invoice, by the relevant person. Where more than one person is liable for a fee, in determining who is required to make payment, the local authority must have regard to any agreement or other document produced to the local authority relating to the terms on which water is supplied and may apportion the charge between them.

Fees and Charges:

SERVICE	OUR FEE FROM 1 APRIL 2026	LAB TEST FEES	TOTAL COST
Risk Assessment	Cost of officer time at £50.25 per hour		
Investigations	Cost of officer time at £50.25 per hour plus lab test fees	Variable per parameter tested	Variable per parameter tested
Large Supplies (Regulation 9, Group A + B) Sample Analysis	£100.60	£215.51	£316.11
Small Supplies (Regulation 10) Sample Analysis	£100.60	£46.75	£147.35
Bacteriological Sample Analysis	£50.25	£15.70	£65.95
Private Water Sample Re-test	£100.60	Variable per parameter retested	Variable per parameter retested
Carrying out works or measures that an owner has failed to carry out in accordance with an improvement notice	At cost - recovered in full from the owner	At cost - recovered in full from the owner	At cost - recovered in full from the owner

Contact us

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For further information visit:

www.ribblevalley.gov.uk or
http://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supply/regs-guidance/index.html