

## **Code of Practice on Enforcement of Water Regulations**

### **Introduction**

Open and helpful – that's the style of approach adopted by Three Valleys Water to ensure that we sustain a safe environment and protect the high quality of our drinking water.

And in order to do that, we, as your supplier, are responsible for promoting all aspects of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 (SI 1148, amendment SI 1506) to prevent waste, misuse, undue consumption, contamination and erroneous measurement of water supplied.

This Code of Practice leaflet explains our approach and the way in which we would like to put these Regulations into practice.

### **Open Approach**

- We plan to produce clear and concise information which will be easily available.
- We will consult recognised interest groups about how we will apply the Regulations, and provide information about how charges will be estimated.
- Our aim is to solve any problems in a mutually beneficial and confidential manner.
- Three Valleys supports the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) which co-ordinates the interpretation and application of the legislation.
- WRAS liaises with architects, designers, manufacturers, factors, installers, individual users and other interested groups, and provides them and water suppliers with advice and technical support.

### **Helpful Style**

- Three Valleys will work with customers and their representatives to achieve best practice and compliance.
- We welcome the opportunity to comment at an early stage on property development and re-development plans for water services as this can benefit all parties.
- We aim to provide a professional and efficient service. All staff will have identity cards and provide telephone numbers for other useful contacts.

### **Education and Awareness**

- Three Valleys water will make site visits when necessary and provide information to raise awareness and inform designers, manufacturers, installers and users of water systems
- Presentations will be made to special interest groups
- A local and national telephone advice service will be available
- Installer bodies, manufacturers and retail chain outlets will be kept up-to-date on compliance matters through Three Valleys and WRAS

### **Explaining Standards**

The "Water Regulations Guide" explains the standards which have to be met by water fittings and installations. It provides helpful, detailed, technical and practical explanations.

Three Valleys supports the development of national and European standards and the testing of water fittings and materials for conformity with these, and will make this

information available to raise awareness among those who need to understand best practice.

### **Solving Complaints**

Three Valleys aims to work with customers to ensure that the Regulations are applied consistently. If customers dispute our interpretation of the Regulations they can draw on the expertise of WRAS.

Designers, manufacturers, factors, installers and individuals can also access the expertise of WRAS.

### **Dispute Advice**

If you have a dispute with your installer, Three Valleys Water can provide advice on matters of compliance with the Regulations; but we will not become involved in contractual matters between installers and building owners.

For certain disputes between a customer and Three Valleys Water, there is an arbitration procedure which is set out in Regulation 13. This will apply when a customer considers us to have imposed unreasonable conditions following notification of proposed work, and when consent for the work to proceed has been withheld. It also covers disputes where we have refused to apply for a relaxation of the Regulations from the Government.

The dispute will be referred to an arbitrator. Only the Court can interpret the Regulations, which is the ultimate recourse over disputes concerning the meaning of the Regulations.

### **Principles of Enforcement – Help Us Protect Drinking Water**

Three Valleys Water will carry out enforcement activities in a fair, practical and cost-effective manner that helps sustain a safe environment.

We expect that most of our customers will want to comply with the Regulations and we will work with them to promote and encourage best practice. However, to meet our responsibilities, Three Valleys Water will take firm action, including prosecution, against those who refuse to comply with the Regulations, and by doing so put the public health at risk and endanger supplies.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the technical design of water installations and fittings.

Reactive Enforcement will be appropriate to circumstances notified to, and identified by Three Valleys Water.

### **Proportionality**

Everyone benefits from a water system installed in accordance with the legislation because this ensures that water quality is safeguarded; water conservation is equally advantageous.

Three Valleys will ensure that all enforcement action is proportionate to the nature of the assessed risk. As far as the law allows, account will be taken of the circumstances of each case, its installer, owner and user.

The highest priority is to prevent contamination of water from backflow and other causes.

The detail of the technical requirements for protection of backflow can be complex and WRAS produces a range of advice leaflets for specific user groups e.g. agriculture, dentists. They provide guidance on the best ways to avoid contamination of water supplies in specific situations.

Three Valleys will continue to pay attention to the needs of high-risk groups by working with WRAS to extend the range of literature.

### **Consistency**

Three Valleys Water will take a consistent approach towards enforcement so that procedures are applied fairly.

All Regulations enforcement staff will be trained to an acceptable level, and be certificated as such. Training will be delivered by recognised organisations providing courses which include the appropriate material.

### **Procedures**

The following activities are necessary to ensure a uniform approach to the administration and enforcement of the legislation throughout the UK.

### **Administration**

Under the Water Industry Act 1999 Section 73 and 74, Three Valleys Water's customers are responsible for ensuring that all apparatus is maintained to operate efficiently. As a condition of receiving a supply, approved devices to prevent backflow must be installed.

For the most serious risk categories and as a condition of receiving a supply, approved devices to prevent backflow must be tested and inspected regularly. Records of tests and of plumbing system configurations and alterations must be notified to Three Valleys Water; records must be kept on customers' premises.

Three Valleys Water will consider all Notices of Intended Work, and may need to carry out an inspection. We may also request additional information to enable the proposed works to be assessed for compliance with the Regulations.

Where an installer is a member of an Approved Plumbers Scheme, the installer will provide the customer and Three Valleys with a certificate of compliance with the legislation.

### **Inspections**

Three Valleys Water will carry out three types of inspections; **Planned, Reactive and Audit**

**Planned** inspections are directed at those new and existing commercial, agricultural, industrial and domestic premises where there is a high risk of contamination of water supplies

We will write to owners and operators in advance of an Inspection to explain the risk of contamination of water supplies, and to make an appointment for a site inspection.

Sample Planned Inspections of housing developments will be made to enforce the Regulations.

There will be Planned Inspections of water use to detect misuse and leaks.

**Reactive** inspections will be carried out in response to customer requests or following other contacts which make an investigation necessary e.g. failure of a water quality test.

Report of water leaks, discharges or overflows may also lead to inspections.

Customer contacts about taste, odour, discoloration or persistent poor pressure can indicate inappropriate plumbing arrangements and an inspection may be necessary to identify the cause.

**Audit** inspections will ensure continued compliance with our standards for members of the Approved Plumber Scheme.

### **Enforcement**

Three Valleys Water wishes to resolve points with other parties, but to fulfil our legal obligations, and in the interests of public health or safety, it will sometimes be necessary to take immediate action.

This includes disconnecting the supply and confiscating apparatus. Where this is so, a written explanation will be provided.

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### **Water Regulations Advisory Service (WRAS)**

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