

Breckland Council

Private Water Supplies Risk Assessments

A Guide to Understanding the Drinking Water
Inspectorate (DWI) Requirements



This leaflet has been prepared by Breckland Council and gives information and advice regarding the requirement to undertake risk assessments on private water supplies.



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Introduction

Private water supplies are regulated by local authorities using The Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009 which came into force in January 2010. The Regulations apply to all who own or use a private water supply in relation to supplies of water intended for human consumption and includes all water either in its original state or after treatment. This includes water intended for drinking, washing, cooking, food preparation or other domestic purposes and all water used in any food production undertaking for the manufacture, processing, preservation or marketing of products or substances intended for human consumption.

A private water supply is a water supply that is not provided by a statutory water undertaker (which in the Breckland area is Anglian Water Services) and where the responsibility for the supply rests with the owner or person(s) who use it. The water source could be from a borehole, well, stream, lake, river or spring.

Regulation 6 of the 2009 Regulations is the section that relates to the requirement to carry out a risk assessment on a private water supply and further information can be found at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2009/3101/regulation/6/made>



Frequently Asked Questions

► ***What is a risk assessment?***

A risk assessment is an on-site inspection and evaluation of all the source and surrounding area conditions. It includes the inspection of devices in the water supply system (pipes, tanks and appliances etc) from source to tap, that may pose an actual or potential danger to the health and well-being of the consumer.

► ***I have been drinking the water for many years and it has never done me any harm. Why does it have to be risk assessed now?***

It is now a statutory requirement under the Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009 to carry out risk assessments on certain types of private water supplies. The risk assessment procedure was developed following outbreaks of E.coli O157 in private water supply consumers. Fundamentally, risk assessments have been introduced to help keep drinking water safe.

► ***Why does my water supply need to have a risk assessment as well as have water samples taken?***

While sampling can show impurities that have occurred, microbiological contamination is often sporadic and may not be revealed by occasional sampling. It would work out extremely expensive to sample for every possible impurity that may be present in your drinking water all the time. Risk assessments set out to identify the actual or potential causes of contamination and will indicate which chemical and bacteriological parameters we should be testing for. After a risk assessment, suitable action can be taken to resolve any problems and therefore prevent situations from getting worse or even starting in the first place.

► ***How will I benefit from having a risk assessment carried out?***

Risk assessment will highlight areas associated with your private water supply that could be improved to ensure that the quality of the drinking water is as good as it can possibly be for you, your family and visitors to your home or business.



► **What type of private water supply is required to have a risk assessment?**

- ⊙ Any type of commercial supply (excluding supplies that are used solely for animal watering purposes) or public premises
- ⊙ Food premises including dairies
- ⊙ Premises with staff
- ⊙ National Trust properties
- ⊙ Campsites and caravan parks
- ⊙ Bed and breakfasts, hotels, pubs and restaurants
- ⊙ Education and medical establishments
- ⊙ Rented domestic properties where one or more dwellings are served by the supply
- ⊙ Private residential properties where more than one property is served from a supply

There is no obligation for a single private domestic supply to be risk assessed but we can carry out a risk assessment upon request and at cost.

► **How often will my supply be risk assessed and why should I have to pay for it?**

There is an obligation for a risk assessment to be carried out every five years. The Regulations permit Local Authorities to charge for this to recover the costs.

► **What is the cost for the risk assessment?**

There is a charge of £30.00 per hour (VAT exempt). For a single commercial supply, the cost is a straight charge to the supply owner. Where two or more commercial properties are fed from the same supply, the cost will be divided equally between both/all parties. Where two or more domestic properties share the same supply, the charge will be shared equally between both/all parties.

The time spent on each assessment including the site visit and desk study varies from site to site but generally takes about two hours. The time may vary if the supply takes longer to inspect, so it will save you money if someone who has knowledge of the supply and system is on site during the time of the risk assessment visit. It will save time if you can provide a plan of the layout of the supply and system and details of any maintenance contracts and if you can give details of the approximate amount of water used on a daily basis.

► ***What happens after the supply has been risk assessed?***

The risk assessment will identify if any parts of the system need attention. We will discuss any improvements required with the relevant person. If we consider there is a potential danger, we will write to the owner and all the occupiers (that we have details for) on the supply.

If I own a private water supply that falls into the category requiring a risk assessment, what should I do next?

We are currently contacting the owners of known private water supplies to arrange appointment times to carry out risk assessments. If you would like your supply assessed sooner, you can contact Environmental Health and we will arrange an appointment with you.

Who can I contact if I have any further queries or questions relating to the risk assessment?

You can email us at eh.bst@breckland.gov.uk or phone **01362 656870** and we will be happy to provide you with any further information required.



If you require this information in another language, large print, audio, Braille or an alternative format please call the Customer Contact Centre on 01362 656878 and we will do our best to help.



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