



Five main areas of the Water Regulations

Contamination

Hosepipes that are left in buckets containing a pesticide solution are an example of backflow risks. When backflow occurs, the pesticide in the bucket is sucked back into the plumbing system where it can be drawn off as drinking water. To prevent this, you need backflow protection.

In domestic premises, hose taps are usually connected directly to the water main. If mains pressure falls, to prevent backflow, they must be protected by a 'double check valve' (a sort of non-return valve), which stops water flowing backwards in the pipes.

Also, by law, hoses must be hand-held and have a 'trigger gun' type flow control, which automatically stops the flow when it's released, and they should never be left with the end submerged in anything.

For hose taps in non-domestic buildings, such as sports facilities, factories, farms or hospitals, the Regulations require a higher level of backflow protection because the contamination risks could be greater.

Usually, this involves supplying the tap via a water storage cistern, which includes an air gap to prevent any contaminant from getting back into the pipe feeding the cistern.

Air gaps are used to prevent backflow in many places, for example, the gap between the outlet of a tap and the top edge of a washbasin.

Or, where the pipe to an industrial storage cistern discharges above the top edge of the cistern. Air gap arrangements can vary depending on the risk. There is even an air gap for when water in the cistern needs to be kept wholesome, for example, for use in food production.





Waste

Big leaks are bad news because the water supply can fail. But what if the leak is small, perhaps even unseen? Some people think that if it's not causing any problems it needn't be fixed straight away. But this is waste and it's a serious business.

The regulations define waste as 'water which is allowed to run to waste through faulty installation, faulty appliances or poor maintenance'. Energy has been consumed to treat and pump this water to you, so wasting it is an environmental issue. It's also likely to give you poor pressure, which will only get worse as time passes. And what about the cost?

So it makes sense to fix leaks before Bristol Water's night time leak detection teams, acting on unusual flow rate information, locate the leak and issue a leakage enforcement notice for immediate repair.



Misuse

Where the energy or water pressure of the mains is being used to provide motive power or electrical generation.



Erroneous Measurement

Erroneous measurement occurs when a meter has been bypassed and the water is, in effect, being stolen.

On-site inspections of business premises, combined with regular mains network checks using sophisticated flow monitoring, can highlight unusual water usage that does not match the meter readings.

Undue Consumption

Often urinals do not have any flow control installed, flushing frequently and unnecessarily. This is undue consumption. A simple timing device is all that's needed to solve the problem.