



GUIDANCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WATER SUPPLY (WATER QUALITY) REGULATIONS 2016 IN ENGLAND AND THE WATER SUPPLY (WATER QUALITY) REGULATIONS 2010 (as amended) IN WALES

The Regulations

Part 2 – Water Supply Zones

Regulation 3: Delineation and designation of water supply zones

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Regulation 3 - Delineation and designation of water supply zones

- 3.1 Regulation 3(1) requires water suppliers to pre-designate the names and areas of the supply zones within its supply area for the forthcoming calendar year. Regulation 3(2) specifies that the water supply zone should not supply more than 100,000 people. Regulation 3(3) requires that the water within a supply zone should be approximately uniform and regulation 3(4) requires that the designation of a water supply zone should not change through the year.
- 3.2 In the last quarter of each calendar year, water companies should review the designation of their water supply zones to ensure that the delineation remains appropriate and assess revised population estimates. The population estimates for water supply zones should relate to permanent residents only. During the review, water companies should identify any water supply zone where the estimated resident population supplied exceeds 100,000, and split or merge the zone accordingly. It is good practice to keep the number of changes to the designation of water supply zones to a minimum.
- 3.3 Regulation 3(3) requires a consistent approach in the delineation of water supply zones. Water companies should therefore first identify which areas are supplied from a single point of supply. A point of supply could be the outlet of a water treatment works, a pumping station, a blending point, a service reservoir or a meter point on a bulk supply of treated water provided by another water supplier. A discrete area supplied from a single point of supply should always be recorded as a single water supply zone unless it supplies more than 100,000 people, in which case the area should be subdivided.
- 3.4 The Inspectorate recognises that actual supply arrangements can be more complicated and the following points are intended to assist in the interpretation of the requirement of regulation 3(3):
 - i. Where each supply zone is served by an individual service reservoir or water tower, booster pumping station or distinguished as a discrete pressure zone or by other appropriate features of the distribution system;
 - ii. Where there is more than one source of water that is of a similar nature and receives the same treatment, and the population supplied remains less than 100,000;
 - iii. Where water supply zones are based on district metered areas and the zones consist of related district metered areas which are supplied from common points of supply.
- 3.5 Water supply zones should be designated according to operational factors, following this guidance. Companies should not follow arbitrary principles or designate zones with a view to influencing performance statistics.
- 3.6 It is recognised that water suppliers sometimes have to take temporary operational actions to maintain water supplies that may involve the introduction of water from points of supply not designated for that supply zone. Such temporary measures should not influence the annual designation of water supply zones. If permanent changes have to be made to the sources that supply a zone, or to the delineation of that zone, the designation of the zone can only be changed for the next calendar year.

- 3.7 Concessionary (free) supplies of water for domestic purposes, for example supplies to a single property or a small number of co-located properties in a rural area, that exist as a consequence of an historic agreement with a landowner, are fully subject to the requirements of the Regulations. Supplies that have similar characteristics (for example surface waters, or springs with minimal treatment) should be grouped together in a single separate water supply zone. Since privatisation in 1989, water companies have been phasing out concessionary supplies that have point of use treatment units. The Inspectorate supports this and considers this approach to be good practice since these types of supply generally expose consumers to greater risks of receiving unwholesome water.
- 3.8 Where the designation of zones is changed prior to the start of a calendar year, companies must specify and keep a record of the relationship between the previous zone designations and the new ones. This information is needed to ensure continuity with regulation 28 [29] risk assessment reports and where there are legal instruments and regulation 6(12) [6A(3)] radioactivity notices in place.