

DRINKING WATER IN HOTELS

Supplying drinking water from tanks is not prohibited – but make sure the appropriate measures are in place

Most hotels make kettles, cups and glasses available in rooms for the use of their guests. This can create confusion, as hoteliers do not necessarily want to put up signs suggesting the water may be anything less than drinking water quality. Perhaps guests assume that the water is safe as long as it is boiled, but if glasses are provided, doesn't that indicate that the water is safe to drink without heating? Maybe, if they are from abroad, they believe that all water is supplied directly from the mains. And is the water safe to use to brush teeth?



Many hotel managers may not themselves know if the water is safe to drink, and hope that as long as the water tank supplying the taps is reasonably clean, and guests usually boil their water, everything should be alright. Clearly this is no guarantee that the water is in fact safe and guests would want more reassurance than this.



The good news is that it is permissible to supply drinking water from a water tank, as long as certain measures are taken. The Water Supply Regulations 1999 do

allow that storage tanks can supply drinking water but that:

the interior of the cistern is kept clean and

the cistern should be regularly inspected and cleaned internally.

“Regularly” cleaned is usually taken as annually. But what sort of tests should be carried out, if any? The Drinking Water Inspectorate has clarified a little further:

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A landlord, or managing agent, should also be able to supply records of inspections and sampling results.

This suggests water sampling of some kind. The DWI refers to the British Standards, which state:

Cleaning and disinfection should take place annually or sooner if monitoring indicates deterioration in aesthetic or microbiological quality.

This indicates regular bacteriological sampling is required, which may be quarterly or 6 monthly depending on the findings of the water hygiene risk assessment

It is also important that the installation meets the design requirements of guidance with sealed lids, vents, insect screens, insulation, overflow and warning pipes, plumbed in so that stagnation is avoided and the tanks can be easily serviced.

If you are interested in putting a water management programme in place which meets these requirements, please contact us to discuss how we can help.

References

The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 and the accompanying Water Regulations Guide.

DWI guidance Water Storage Tanks and Cisterns, available at:

<http://dwi.defra.gov.uk/consumers/advice-leaflets/tanks.pdf>

BS 8558:2011 Guide to the design, installation, testing and maintenance of services supplying water for domestic use within buildings and their curtilages and complementary guidance to BS EN 806



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