

WATER COOLERS

INFORMATION FOR MANUFACTURERS/WRAS APPROVAL APPLICANTS /
PLUMBING SYSTEM SPECIFIERS / USERS

REQUIREMENTS FOR MAINS FED DRINKING WATER COOLERS TO COMPLY WITH THE WATER FITTINGS REGULATIONS

Requirements of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999

The Water Fittings Regulations (England and Wales), the Scottish Water Byelaws, and soon the Northern Ireland Water Regulations, are to protect the quality of water supplied against contamination and to promote water efficiency. Every water fitting, plumbing system and appliance which receives water from the public supply comes under the scope of these Regulations. Regulation 4 requires “every fitting to be of an appropriate quality and standard and be suitable for the circumstances in which it is used”. The best way to demonstrate that a fitting complies with this is by manufacturers submitting their products for assessment by WRAS against the Government’s performance requirements – ‘the Regulators’ Specification’ - to gain WRAS Approval.

The main components of water coolers which are checked for compliance are:

- supply hoses [*non-compliant hoses can cause a strong taint in water, especially if the water is warm and stagnant*];
- solenoid/dispensing/isolating valves [*especially for reliability to prevent waste of water over a reasonable lifetime*];
- backflow protection devices [*to protect the plumbing system against contamination by back-siphonage*].

WRAS Approval and listing of fittings and products which meet the requirements of the Regulations

On behalf of the Water Suppliers, WRAS approves fittings and products, including coolers, which have been tested and assessed as meeting the requirements of the Regulations. Approved products are listed in the WRAS Water Fittings and Materials Directory, which is freely available on the WRAS website (www.wras.co.uk/Directory). Approval and listing is for five years, and includes full contact information for the manufacturer or the factor. WRAS Approval means that provided the fitting is installed in accordance with any approval conditions, it will comply with the requirements for water fittings in the Regulations – including that it will not contaminate or otherwise taint the water supplied and, where applicable, will not contaminate the water installation by backflow. Where applicable, WRAS Approval includes assessment of the effect of non-metallic components on water quality, using the British Standard BS6920 to check that components will not encourage microbial growth or taint the water, both of which can lead to complaints of bad tasting water. WRAS Approval, whilst excluding assessment of product performance for its intended purpose, does include assessment of the durability of mechanical components over a reasonable lifetime. WRAS staff are happy to advise applicants on detailed requirements for WRAS Approval before application. For example, if the components used are already WRAS listed, they will not be tested anew. Many applications are facilitated by applicants changing (generally imported) components for listed components.



The WRAS approved product logo

Cost of gaining WRAS approving and listing for water coolers

The major part of the cost of gaining WRAS Approval is for the testing of the water cooler, which is a commercial arrangement between suitably-accredited test houses and the applicant. If all components are already listed and there is no need to test non-metallic components, a typical cost is £900. If applicable, that may include an entire family of products (such as of different capacities) having the same generic approved components and water-paths.

WRAS Background – and the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations

The Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) works on behalf of, and is fully funded by, the UK water supply companies, in order to assist consumers to satisfactory water installations which meet the requirements of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. WRAS provides a free Regulations technical advisory service for the public, on behalf of the water companies, as a service to their customers. The Water Fittings Regulations are to protect the quality of water supplied against contamination and to promote water efficiency. It is the statutory duty of water companies to enforce the Regulations. Information on the Regulations is on the WRAS and Defra websites. This information note is produced in cooperation with Water UK, the representative body for the UK regulated water industry