

## **Requirements for Recognition as a Water Regulations Approved Contractor**

### **Introduction**

APHC operates a Department of the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) recognised Approved Contractor Scheme under the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. The Water Regulations Approved Contractor Scheme is additional to the APHC Membership Scheme(s); there are no additional costs for Water Regulations scheme membership. Participation in the scheme also includes a listing on the WaterSafe website.

Approval permits scheme members –

- To be exempt from certain water company work notification requirements.
- To receive preferential services from some water companies when making arrangements for new water supply connections.
- To issue water regulations compliance certificates for work carried out.
- To have a Water Regulations listing on the APHC website and the WaterSafe website (online hub and search facility for Water Regulations Approved Contractor Scheme members).
- To utilise the WaterSafe brand for promotional purposes.

To become a Water Regulations Approved Contractor, scheme members have to meet and be approved against a number of business and operative requirements, in addition to their APHC membership scheme(s) criteria.

### **Requirements for Recognition**

The following outlines the requirements for recognition as an APHC Water Regulations Approved Contractor Scheme Member. Scheme members must –

#### **The Business**

- Maintain up to date membership of the relevant APHC Membership Scheme(s), so meeting the core requirements of the Membership Scheme(s) for business registration purposes (if membership of the APHC Scheme(s) lapses then membership of the Water Regulations Approved Contractor Scheme is deemed to have lapsed).
- Continue to abide by the scheme rules of the APHC Membership Schemes(s) against which the business is currently approved.
- Only promote the APHC and WaterSafe brands in line with applicable brand guidelines and on termination of APHC membership comply with the requirements to remove both brands from vehicles, websites, items of stationery and all other forms of medium on which the business has promoted both brands.
- Continue to operate a customer complaints procedure in line with the requirements of the APHC Membership Scheme(s) rules and make customers aware of the in-company complaints system. In the case of unresolved customer complaints, refer the customer complainant to APHC for review under its independent complaints mechanism.
- Provide to APHC (on request) up to date copies of the business Public Liability and Employer Liability (where appropriate) insurances.
- Ensure that all work carried out by plumbing operatives is to the standards laid down in the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.

- Ensure that at least 1 in 5 plumbing operatives employed by the business undertaking plumbing work are registered with APHC on the Water Regulations Approved Contractor Scheme and meet the minimum qualification requirements laid down for operatives.
- Notify work to the water company in line with the requirements of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.
- Brief plumbing operatives registered under the scheme on scheme requirements and ensure that they issue compliance certificates for plumbing work falling under scope of the requirements of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.
- Ensure that compliance certificates are only issued by operatives who hold current certification in the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.
- Ensure that when a customer requests work through the WaterSafe website or through a water company recommendation and the work is in scope of the Water Regulations, then only operatives registered on the APHC Water Regulations Approved Contractor Scheme must attend to the work.
- Provide on request, access for APHC to check a random sample of Water Regulations related work carried out by the firm and check samples of compliance certificates issued.

### **Plumbing Operatives**

The business must employ operatives to the minimum 1 to 5 ratio mentioned previously who meet minimum qualification requirements detailed below in order to be registered on the scheme –

Each operative must hold the following as a minimum –

- A Level 2 NVQ in a mechanical services discipline (plumbing, or heating and ventilation, or refrigeration & air conditioning or gas fitting), **and** a certificate of competence in the requirements of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations **or**
- A City & Guilds Craft Certificate in a mechanical services discipline (plumbing, or heating and ventilation, or refrigeration & air conditioning or gas fitting), **and** a certificate of competence in the Requirements of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations **or**
- A BPEC Level 3 Award in Safe Systems of Hot & Cold Water and Sanitation **plus** demonstration of a minimum of 5 years work experience by full completion of the WaterSafe initial assessment documentation **or**
- A Level 3 QCF award in domestic plumbing, heating & gas fitting completed since 2011 with integral Water Regulations certification (please contact the Technical Department for full details of qualification numbers accepted under this entry route).

### *Additional Notes*

1. *There is currently no expiry date on Water Regulations competency certificates, this may change if there is a major review of the regulations in the future and further update training may be required.*
2. *The attached technical advice note identifies the notification requirements reference work on water systems.*
3. *Template compliance certificate designs may be downloaded from the commissioning section of the support documents listing behind the members log-in on the APHC website.*

The requirement to notify the installation or modification of certain types of water system or component(s) has been with us for many years. Notification prior to the work taking place is a statutory obligation under the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.

The regulations identify that the following range of work needs to be notified to the relevant water company at least 10 days prior to the work taking place and on which their consent to carry out the work should be sought. Notification applies to water systems installation work relating to the following –

- The erection of any new building or structure
- The extension or alteration of the water system in any premises except a domestic dwelling
- The material change in use of any premises e.g. from a dwelling to a dental practice
- The installation of:
  - A bidet with an ascending spray or flexible hose
  - A bath larger than 230 litres (measured to the centre of the overflow)
  - A pump or booster drawing more than 12 litres per minute
  - A reverse osmosis unit
  - A water treatment unit producing a waste water discharge or requiring water for regeneration or cleaning
  - A reduced pressure zone (RPZ) valve or other mechanical device for protection against backflow in fluid category 4 or 5
  - A garden watering system unless designed to be a hand-operated one
  - Any water system laid outside a building and either less than 750 mm or more than 1350 mm below ground level
- Construction of an automatically-replenished pond or swimming pool of more than 10,000 litres.

In the event that notification needs to take place then the water company usually provides a standard form on which the relevant details are recorded. Some members have experienced difficulty in trying to reach the correct department in the water company to progress notification requirements.

A good source of contact information is the website of the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) at [www.wras.co.uk](http://www.wras.co.uk). The website includes a water industry contact section detailing main contacts for Water Regulations by Water Company. Typical details required on notification are –

- The name and address of the person giving notice and, if different, of the person to whom the consent should be sent
- A description of the proposed work and any related change of use of premises
- The location of the premises and their use or intended use
- For major work items, a plan of that part of the premises which relates to the proposed work and a diagram showing the pipework and fittings to be installed
- The plumbing contractor's name and address, if an approved contractor is to do the work.

On receiving the notice the water company has 10 days within which a response must be provided to the applicant, the response can be either of the following –

- Consent to the work is unconditionally provided, or
- Consent to do the work is provided on certain conditions (an example of this could be that the initial application was based on an unvented hot water system but the water company has identified that the mains supply is inadequate and requests a storage system to be installed as an alternative), or
- Consent to carry out the work is refused.

The water company cannot extend the notice period of 10 days, if a response is not provided within that 10 day period then consent is deemed to have been unconditionally granted and the work can progress. It is recommended that if timescales are tight relating to the 10 day period then all correspondence with the water company relating to the notification should be by recorded delivery.

#### **Water Regulations Approved Contractor Schemes**

Some confusion does exist over the notification requirements relating to work carried out by members of a recognised Water Regulations Approved Contractor Scheme, the separate APHC scheme that is operated is an example of this.

If work is carried out by a business which is in membership to an Approved Contractor Scheme then the following work from the list shown above need not be notified to the water company –

- (a) the extension or alteration of a water system on any premises
- (b) a bidet with an ascending spray or flexible hose
- (c) a reduced pressure zone (RPZ) valve assembly or other mechanical device for protection against a fluid which is in fluid category 4 or 5 (However, it is a Water Industry requirement that prior notice of installation of an RPZ valve is given. For RPZ valves it is also a water industry requirement that details of the commissioning and testing of the valve must be provided to the Water Supplier).

An approved contractor must complete a compliance certificate to the person who commissioned the works, for all works that fall under the scope of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 which includes work on most water fittings in hot and cold water systems. In addition where work has required prior notification to the water company then a copy of the compliance certificate must be forwarded by the approved contractor to the water company.

Further advice or guidance on the application of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 may be sought from the APHC Technical Services Department on 0121 711 5030.