

Guidance for the installation of Washing Machines in Dental Premises and The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.

The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, the Water Supply (Water Fittings) (Scotland) Byelaws 2014 and the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009, are a national requirement applying to all water fittings and appliances which use or can use water supplied by a water undertaker. Their purpose is to safeguard public health and to conserve water through the prevention of waste, misuse, undue consumption, contamination and erroneous measurement of water supplies.

As enforcers of these regulations water undertakers, like Yorkshire Water, have a statutory duty to ensure owners and occupiers comply with their legal obligations under these regulations. This includes making sure plumbing systems incorporate adequate provision to prevent contamination by backflow between equipment and different areas within a premise as well as backflow into the water network itself.

Notification of Plumbing work (regulation 5)

Before any proposed plumbing work in a dental practice, including the installation of a washing machine, is carried out the local water undertaker must be notified, and consent granted. This is a legal requirement, but more importantly provides an important safety check. A water fittings inspection can identify ways to reduce water usage and water quality risks which could affect staff, patients and neighbouring premises - things like unsuitable fittings, cross connections, inadequate backflow protection, poor design and poor workmanship may also be identified.

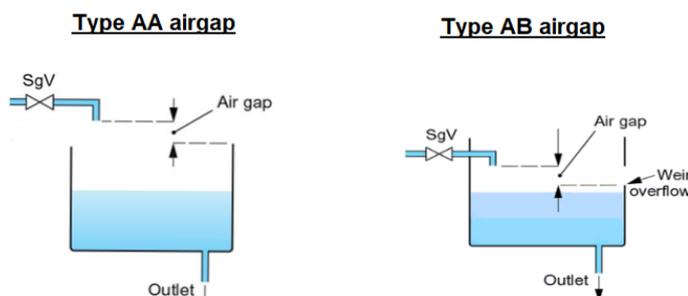
A downloadable regulation 5 notification form can be found at the Yorkshire Water website <https://www.yorkshirewater.com/business/water-regulations/>

Backflow protection

The regulations identify five fluid categories. Fluids which are categorised as being fluid category 3, 4 or 5 pose a health hazard, the most serious health hazards being those categorised as fluid category 5. The possibility of water supplies becoming contaminated as a result of backflow is a known risk. To address this the regulations identifies backflow protection arrangements and devices that can be used, specifying the type (protection against back siphonage or back pressure) and level (fluid category rating) of backflow protection each provides.

Washing machines in dental practices

When assessing the risk posed by a washing machine in non-domestic premises, several factors will be considered including what it will be used to launder and whether the machine has any built-in backflow protection and if so what level and type of backflow protection this provides. Protective clothing that has been worn while carrying out a dental procedure in a surgery, may be contaminated with blood and saliva. If laundered on site this would be considered as a high-risk activity and the washing machines used would require backflow protection to fluid category 5, this is higher than that typically found in domestic washing machines. If a washing machine does not incorporate suitable backflow protection to comply with the regulations it will need to be supplied from an independent break cistern supplied via a Type AA or AB air gap. (Ref -The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999)



AA airgap.
Airgap should be 2 x the diameter of the incoming supply above the top edge of the cistern or the tank opening

Other contamination risks

If a washing machine incorporates adequate backflow protection, then it can be connected to the plumbing system. This connection is typically made via a flexible hose. Flexible hoses connecting appliances such as washing machines to the water supply are a frequent cause of customer taste and odour problems. To avoid this check to make sure the hose conforms to BS 6920 or equivalent

Examples of single check valves



Enquiries

If you have any queries regarding the installation of a washing machine or the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 you should contact your local Water undertakers Water Regulations team for further advice, If you are in Yorkshire Waters supply area this can be done by emailing waterregulation@yorkshirewater.co.uk or by calling 01274 804708