

Alternative Water Supply – Planned / Unplanned Events

Yorkshire Water's Policy

June 2025



YorkshireWater

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1. Introduction

Since the retail market opened in April 2017, Non-Household Customers (customers) who are typically businesses, public sector organisations and charities, have been able to choose their water Retailer.

Retailers provide billing services for water and waste water, read meters and handle enquiries and complaints. Wholesalers (also known as water companies) look after the pipework and take care of the water supply and removal of waste water.

2. Aim

The aims of this policy are to:

- provide Retailers and Non-Household customers with guidelines on provision of alternative water supplies during unplanned / planned events.
- explain Yorkshire Water's Wholesale statutory requirements under the Security and Emergency Measures Direction (SEMD).
- ensure a consistent approach is followed within Yorkshire Water's operational area.

3. Principles

- 3.1 Whilst Yorkshire Water will always try to provide a constant supply of water, we cannot guarantee to maintain water supplies 24 hours a day / 365 days. Unplanned interruptions to supply may occur due to factors outside our control such as burst pipes, adverse weather conditions (flooding, heavy frost, or drought) and events or work that must be carried out to resolve an emergency situation.

- 3.2 Supplies may also have to be interrupted, from time to time, to carry out planned repairs and maintenance or other such improvement works on the network.
- 3.3 Yorkshire Water maintains emergency, incident, and long-term plans to help avoid or manage unplanned events and incidents.

4. Security and Emergency Measures Direction / Sensitive Customers Definition

- 4.1 There is a requirement under the Security and Emergency Measures Direction (SEMD), section 208 of the Water Industry Act 1991, for Wholesalers to have plans in place to provide additional services in the event of a water supply interruption.
- 4.2 SEMD directs that certain sets of customers should take priority. These are "the domestic needs of the sick, elderly, disabled, hospitals, schools and other vulnerable sections of the population". Regard must also be given to the needs of Non-Household customers.
- 4.3 In the event of a water supply interruption, Wholesalers must put in place measures to maintain a minimum level of supply in accordance with SEMD. A minimum of 10 litres / person / day of drinking water must be provided within the first 24 hours. This is increased to 20 litres / person / day in the event of a prolonged incident lasting 5 days or more.
- 4.4 Yorkshire Water will provide temporary alternative supplies to eligible sensitive customers* on a priority basis. This includes premises occupied by the following:
- Hospitals and Prisons
 - Residential Care Homes, Hospices, Nursing Homes, Sheltered Housing

- NHS Centres, Day Care Facilities, Doctors, Dentists,
- Ambulance Stations, Police Stations, Magistrates Courts, Fire Stations
- Schools – up to and including secondary
- Critical national or local infrastructure – airport, power, rail
- Essential food manufacturers
- Premises with livestock, Vets, Zoos, Kennels

*Further details can be found in our Sensitive Customer and Site Specific Arrangement Policy.

5. Unplanned Events

5.1 Wholesaler responsibility

5.1.1 Where unplanned interruptions or network failure occurs, our initial course of action is to rezone supplies to minimise disruption. We may also pump tankered water into the network to maintain or recover customer supplies.

5.1.2 Where rezoning of the network is not possible, we will provide temporary alternative water supplies on a prioritised basis (see Appendix A Vulnerability Tiers). This includes delivery of bottled water or setting up drinking water collection points, deployment of bowzers, standpipes, and tankers. Such supplies may be sufficient to meet domestic needs but may not meet an NHH customer's requirement to maintain their business operations.

5.1.3 In any incident first priority for alternative supplies will always be given to domestic customers (including priority groups within the domestic population). Temporary alternative water supplies will be provided to NHH customers on a priority basis and will depend on the scale and severity of the incident, the time of day, our available resources, and the scale of the customers on-site operations. If there is a Tier 1 incident (see Appendix B – Retail Wholesale Group (RWG) Guide Event Tiers), we may only be able to provide a minimum level of service under SEMD.

- 5.1.4 We're committed to providing the highest-quality services and as a Wholesaler of water and sewerage services, by law we must meet certain standards. Our Business Charter outlines our performance commitments for unplanned interruptions to supply and the compensation we pay if we fail to meet them.
- 5.1.5 In the event of an incident or unplanned event we will use various media to publish information for customers and Retailers including website updates and social media.
- 5.1.6 We send push notifications to Retailers to notify them of the event type (Operational Terms Part E: E3 – E7) and the event tier. A call will be made to the Retailer's 24 hour emergency contact number for Tier 1 large scale events only.
- 5.1.7 Where we require specific messages to be passed onto customers, we will provide a script for Retailers to follow. We will provide copies of any letters issued to customers during an incident e.g. boil order notices or temporary usage bans.

5.2. NHH customer responsibility

- 5.2.1 Customers should inform their Retailer if they believe they are eligible to be flagged as a sensitive customer.
- 5.2.2 The majority of customers are not eligible for alternative supplies as they do not fall into the definition of sensitive under SEMD.
- 5.2.3 Where a customer relies on a constant supply of water, we recommend that they have a business continuity plan in place in the event of a water supply failure. This could include one or more of the following solutions to mitigate any supply interruption:
- On site storage (with a capacity to be able to operate for a defined number of hours)

- Provision of emergency tanker (via a private contractor)
- Borehole or river abstraction
- Rainwater harvesting systems
- Wastewater recycling or grey water recovery

5.2.4 Customers who are sensitive to even very short disruptions to their water supply should consider having a more comprehensive business continuity plan, to minimise the risk to loss of business.

5.2.5 Customers using water for non-domestic purposes should have a storage tank which can hold the quantity of water that is likely to be needed in any continuous 8-hour period per our Terms and Conditions of Metered Supply.

5.2.6 Customers may wish to discuss additional support services with their Retailer.

5.2.7 During an incident small or medium sized customers may be asked to pick up bottled water from supply stations set up in the affected area.

5.2.8 In some instances we may be able to position bowzers or tankers for the use of sensitive customers, but this cannot be guaranteed and will always be subject to availability.

5.2.9 We may ask customers to reduce their water demand or take other reasonable steps to assist in the event of an incident.

5.2.10 We are not able to provide alternative supplies e.g. bottled water, tankers where a customer experiences a problem on their own private pipe work e.g. leak or frozen pipe.

5.3 Retailer responsibility

5.3.1 The Retailer should review customer site sensitivity as part of their onboarding process and add / remove sensitive customer flags to CMOS within two (2) Business Days of

becoming aware of any change or during the course of applying for a new connection. (Operational Terms Part A – New Connections).

5.3.2 The Retailer should obtain an operational site contact as part of their onboarding process and provide this to Yorkshire Water when asked to do so during an incident. Details provided should include SPID, customer banner name and specific operational site contact details, not a billing contact name e.g. Accounts Payable.

5.3.3 Where a Retailer has a mutual agreement in place with us to share customer contact details, these should be updated on an annual basis. When sharing customer data, Retailers must ensure a level of security appropriate to the risk e.g. by encrypting any e-mail file attachment which contains personal data.

*Further guidance can be found in the MOSL Emergency Contact Details Guidance document <https://www.mosl.co.uk/market-codes/guidance-documents>

5.3.4 The Retailer should pass information onto customers when asked to do so by Yorkshire Water during an incident and should follow any scripts provided. They should also respond to enquiries or seek further information from us if needed. In some instances, direct telephone contact may be required with certain customers.

5.3.5 Retailers should ask customers to contact us directly in the event of an unplanned event and provide the relevant contact details on their website and on their out of hours telephone messaging.

5.3.6 Retailers should provide 24 hour contact details to us and be available to support communications with customers during incidents.

- 5.3.7 Retailers should feedback to us on the success rates of any communications with customers.
- 5.3.8 Retailers should provide guidance to customers on what additional support services they can offer in the event of a problem on the customer's private pipe work.

6. Planned Events

6.1 Wholesaler responsibility

- 6.1.1 We will notify customers directly, by letter, in advance of planned work that will impact their business. This notification includes work that will impact on water or sewerage services, road diversions, other access restrictions.
- 6.1.2 We will notify customers in advance of long-term capital works. At the same time, we will notify Retailers of such works including the nature of the work, the likely level of impact, the geographical area affected by postcode outcode (first three or four characters). (Operational Terms Part D: D1)
- 6.1.3 We will notify customers in advance of short term planned activities. At the same time, we will notify Retailers of the nature of the work, the affected properties and whether any sensitive customers are impacted. Where we need to reschedule work such that a new start date or completion date is required, we will provide notice to both the customer and the Retailer. (Operational Terms Part D: D2).
- 6.1.4 We will notify customers in advance of reactive planned activities. At the same time, we will notify the Retailer of the nature of the work, the affected properties and whether any sensitive customers are impacted. Where the nature of the activity is such that it is not possible to provide advance notice,

we will follow the unplanned events procedures. (Operational Terms Part D: D3).

6.1.5 We will consider the needs of sensitive customers when planning work and may agree to rearrange such work, however this is not always possible and depends on other factors such as Council and Highway restrictions; how urgent the work is e.g. leak repairs; how many other customers are affected.

6.1.6 We are not able to provide temporary alternative water supplies e.g. bottled water or bowsers in the event of a planned supply interruption. Notice will be given to enable customers to make their own appropriate alternative arrangements.

*We will consider requests from sensitive customers where there are mitigating circumstances, but this will depend on our available resources.

6.1.7 Where we have notified a customer of a planned supply interruption, we will not pay compensation for loss of business, however we will consider compensation for longer term works that may impact a business e.g. roadwork.

6.1.8 We will notify customers and their Retailers with details of any contingency plans should the planned work take longer than expected.

(See Appendix B – RWG Unplanned Events Guide – Event Tiers and Appendix C– RWG Planned Activities Guide – Work Types for Timescales)

6.2 NHH customer responsibility

6.2.1 Customers should make their own appropriate alternative supply arrangements for the period of the supply interruption e.g. minimising usage; ensuring storage tanks are full; filling kettles and sinks; purchasing their own bottled water.

6.2.2 Customers who rely on a constant supply of water but do not have on site storage, do so at their own business risk and should have a business continuity plan in place to mitigate for any planned supply interruptions.

6.2.3 Customers may wish to discuss additional support services with their Retailer.

6.3 Retailer responsibility

6.3.1 Retailers should relay information on planned activities to customers in a timely manner, if requested to do so.

6.3.2 Where a customer raises concern about the impact of any short term planned activities, the Retailer should provide comments to the Wholesaler within five (5) Business Days of being notified.

7. References

- Wholesale-Retail Code Part 1: Objectives, Principles and Definitions
- Wholesale-Retail Code Part 3: Operational Terms- Part A, D and E
- The Security and Emergencies Measures Direction (SEMD)
- The Water Industry Act 1991
- The Civil Contingency Act 2004
- MOSL Emergency Contact Details Guidance Document (per CPW10)
- YW Business Charter
- YW Terms and Conditions of Metered Supply

This policy is aligned to the following Retail Wholesale Group (RWG) Guides see <https://www.yorkshirewater.com/business/alignment-to-rwg-guidance/>

8. Contact details

YW Wholesale Service Desk between 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday - 0344 902 0228.

For emergency assistance at other times contact the YW Operational Centre 0333 414 9040.

9. Review date/ version control

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Document Approval

NHH Customer Manager Document Owner (Author)	Head of Wholesale Market Services Document Approval Manager
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Document Revision History

Version	Date	Amendment Details
1	Mar-17	New Policy
2	Aug-19	<p>Introduction adjusted to include priority basis and other dependencies for provision of alternative supplies and exclusion of planned interruptions.</p> <p>Adjusted Planned / Reactive Operational Activity to include additional point about planned interruptions being excluded.</p> <p>Added Unplanned Events/ Network Failure section.</p> <p>SEMD section adjusted to include priority basis and other dependencies for provision of alternative supplies.</p>
3	Nov-20	<p>Refreshed in line with policy best practice.</p> <p>Introduction and SEMD section adapted to simplify.</p> <p>Added high level regulatory roles and responsibilities of trading parties and YW further support to Principles.</p> <p>Unplanned Events/ Network Failure added RWG good practice for unplanned events. Drought and alternative supply roles and responsibilities section.</p> <p>Planned / Reactive Operational Activity added RWG good practice for planned events. Added business risk and road closures/ blocked access.</p> <p>Added RWG good practice and alignment to References.</p> <p>Added Appendices A-C</p>

10. Appendix A– YW Vulnerability Tiers

Tier	Tier Description	Examples of Type of Premises	Yorkshire Water Response*
Tier 1	High dependency and / or high occupancy vulnerable premises where closure or relocation would be logistically impossible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Hospitals (with A and E and / or Critical Care) Prisons Other Hospitals 	<p>A Site-Specific Arrangement (SSA) will be put in place to provide alternative supplies to major hospitals and prisons.</p> <p>Assessment of appropriate alternative supplies for other hospitals.</p>
Tier 2	Premises where interruption to supply could result in risk to life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential care homes Hospices Nursing Homes Sheltered Housing 	<p>Provision of static tank or bower</p> <p>Provision of bottled water</p>
Tier 3	Premises where interruption to supply could impact the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHS walk-in centres Day care facilities Critical national or local infrastructure e.g. Airport, Power, Rail Education (schools up to and including secondary) Doctors or Dental surgery Essential food manufacturers 	<p>Collection of bottled water from hub location.</p> <p>Provision of bottled water.</p> <p>Early years and primary schools will be prioritised depending upon resource available.</p>
Tier 4	Premises where interruption to supply could impact animal health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Premises with livestock Farms Zoos Vets 	<p>Consider use of non-potable water for animal welfare.</p> <p>Provision of static tank or bowser.</p> <p>Collection of bottled water from hub location.</p> <p>Provision of bottled water.</p>

*Dependent upon available resource during the Unplanned Event / Incident

10. Appendix B – RWG Unplanned Events Guide – Event Tiers

Tier	Conditions
Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large-scale and/or long duration • Significant impact on site specific arrangements and/or sensitive and /or livestock customers • Opening of incident room • Assistance may be required from the Retailer with regards to communication to NHH customers, and there is a need to proactively notify the Retailer(s)
Tier 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesser size and/or duration, but still affecting a considerable number of customers • Limited or no impact on site specific arrangements and/or sensitive and /or livestock customers • Incident room not opened • May include event type 'Water quality' where the problem is discolouration • Assistance may be required from the Retailer with regards to communication to NHH customers, and there is a need to proactively notify the Retailer(s)
Tier 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesser size and/or duration, affecting a small number of customers or very short-lived event • Limited or no impact on site specific arrangements and/or sensitive and/or livestock customers • Incident room not opened • No assistance required from Retailers and no need to proactively notify the Retailer as issue is kept under control

10. Appendix C– RWG Planned Activities Guide – Work Types

Code	Timeframe	Nature of Work
D1	Notification of capital works – long-term planning. At least 3 months advance notification	Capital Water and Sewerage Works
D2	Short-term planned activities At least 22 Business Days advance notification	Cyclical flushing of the distribution network*
		Exchange of bulk meters on a Wholesalers network
		Leak repairs (e.g. non urgent leaks that do not require immediate action)
		Step test (Wholesaler distribution network testing) *
		Asset Maintenance / Repairs (e.g. hydrant or valve repair / replacement)
D3	Reactive activities At least 48 hours advance notification	Sewer collapse (Minor works required)
		Flushing due to a discoloration incident, low pressure, meter blockage
		Leak repairs
		Step test (Wholesaler distribution network testing)
		Asset Maintenance / Repairs requiring urgent action
		Sewer collapse

*Currently YW provide notification as per D3

Thank you

For more information contact:

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