

Water supplied solely for non-drinking uses

Water supplied solely for non-drinking purposes is not regulated under the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2011* (the Act). This includes water supplied to homes on a commercial basis for purposes such as garden watering, showers, clothes washing or toilet flushing.

The Act does not apply to non-drinking water supplies. However providers of these supplies have obligations to ensure that all customers and users of the water are aware that it is not suitable for drinking, food preparation or cleaning of teeth. Customers of the water have responsibilities relating to the correct use of water provided for non-drinking uses.

Non-drinking water supplies

Non-drinking water supplies provide water from rivers or dams, groundwater and other sources that are not considered suitable for drinking but are suitable for other domestic uses such as garden watering and toilet flushing. It does not include recycled water delivered through a third pipe system.

There are a range of non-drinking water supplies in South Australia including a limited number of SA Water supplies, groundwater and river water. In some cases irrigation water is used for domestic non-drinking purposes.

In most cases homes supplied with this type of supply use rainwater tanks as sources of drinking water.

Responsibilities of providers

Providers of non-drinking water supplies should regularly notify users/customers that the water is not to be used for drinking, food preparation or cleaning teeth. This should include reminders on any formal communication such as bills, rate notices or circulars.

Any publicly accessible taps (eg in parks or reserves) should be marked with a sign noting that the water is not suitable for drinking.

Responsibilities of users

Non-drinking water supplies should not be

used for drinking, food preparation or cleaning teeth without further treatment. This type of water should also not be added to rainwater tanks used as a source of drinking water.

Visitors to homes should be advised about taps supplying water for non-drinking purposes.

Landlords need to advise tenants about taps supplying water for non-drinking purposes.

Accommodation or function centres need to advise guests and other users of centres about taps supplying water for non-drinking purposes.

In commercial premises taps should be clearly marked "**Water not suitable for drinking**".

Information about why a water supply has been classified as non-drinking should be obtained from the water provider. In some cases providers may advise that water can be used for drinking after being boiled.

Monitoring

Water provided for non-drinking uses should be tested to determine quality and suitability for use.

Water taken from surface waters such as rivers and provided to homes for purposes such as showers and bathing should comply with the National Health and



Medical Research Council (NHMRC) [Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Water](#). The primary cause of concern is microbiological quality including the presence of blue-green algae. Water should be tested for *E.coli* and the presence of blue green algae should be monitored. As a first step this can be achieved by visual inspections for the development of green to blue-green coloured blooms near the intake to the water supply.

Separate testing may not be required if the water body is tested by another provider or agency (e.g. the main channel of the River Murray is tested by SA Water).

Water taken from bores should be tested for fluoride, arsenic and health related metals (antimony, barium, beryllium, boron, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, mercury, molybdenum, nickel, selenium, silver, uranium). Concentrations should be compared to guideline values as published in the NHMRC [Australian Drinking Water Guidelines](#) and multiplied by 10 to take into account the lower exposure associated with non-drinking uses. Testing should be undertaken once every 2 years.

Choice of laboratories

The testing of water samples should be done by a NATA accredited analytical laboratory or by a laboratory approved for testing under the Act. A list of approved laboratories can be accessed at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/safedrinkingwateract.

Contact details for laboratories can also be found under “Analysts” in Yellow Pages®. Advice should always be sought from the laboratory regarding the appropriate way to collect a sample. For example, it is advisable to purge a bore (let the water run for some time, for example, 15-20 minutes) before samples are collected.

Once test results are received advice on interpretation can be obtained from the Water Quality Unit on 8226 7100.

Guidelines

The *Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Water* and the *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines* can be accessed at the NHMRC website www.nhmrc.gov.au.

For more information

Water Quality Unit
Public Health
SA Health
Telephone: 8226 7100
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/safedrinkingwateract

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