

1 Outdoor Drinking Fountains

Outdoor drinking fountains range from historical features to new digital units. This factsheet sets out our recommendations for installing and maintaining a digital unit in our supply area. For advice on older non-digital fountains please contact us. It also does not cover fountains installed within a building as these usually have the same requirements as a standard tap connection.

We support the growing number of fountains since this reduces the consumption of single-use plastic and provides residents with easily accessible good quality drinking water – providing the installation is checked and maintained adequately. Due to the environmental and health benefits, we will generally not charge for the water if the unit is available to the public.

Where should I install the fountain?

The easy method is to connect it to an existing water supply pipe. We do not allow connections to leaded pipework. Alternatively a new connection to the water main can usually be arranged, at an additional cost. Be aware that some installations will require planning consent so we recommend you contact the local authority's planning team.

How should it be installed?

Firstly, the fountain will need to have a separate water meter and stop valve so it can be isolated from the water supply without affecting other supplies. These need to be

accessible for maintenance purposes. A key to operate the stop valve should be kept near the fountain so that it can be turned off in an emergency. This key should be of a universal type so that we are also able to turn off the unit if we are called to site when the local key is not accessible.

The unit and fittings should be approved under the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (www.wras.co.uk) to ensure it meets water quality standards, and fitted with a double check valve to protect against backflow. It needs to have a drainage connection so that the unit can be flushed through and drained down, as well as to capture water pouring into the dispenser area. The unit can be stand-alone or wall mounted, but must be securely bolted. We recommend units that are designed to fill bottles only, i.e. without a spout for drinking directly from the unit (this is known as a 'bubbler') since this is less likely to have water quality issues.

It is good practice to carry out a risk assessment of the site to evaluate and mitigate against problems such as freezing, vandalism and contamination from animals.

The unit should be labelled with contact details so that users can easily report issues.

Does the water need to be checked?

Before the fountain is made available to users the water supply needs to have a water quality certificate to confirm it meets the requirements of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations in terms of its

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'wholesomeness'. This certificate should be sent to us. We recommend that the water is sampled regularly, such as quarterly. You will need to consider the actions that will need to be taken if the sample results are not satisfactory, and who will take responsibility for this.

Maintenance Requirements

The owner of the unit is responsible for its maintenance. However, we suggest that the unit is checked and cleaned frequently, such as daily or at least several times a week. The cleaning regime and frequency will depend on the site, usage and sampling results. You may need to consider the risk of legionella – we recommend that you contact a specialist consultancy regarding this.

The unit may need to be isolated and drained down in winter, especially during cold periods. The unit and fittings should also be checked for leakage, and any leaks rectified quickly.

We recommend that records of cleaning and maintenance should be held for at least one year.

Contact Us

Our Customer Services Team is available on 01737 772000. You can email

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