



DOORSTEP DIGEST

Water Use, Part G, and Water Efficiency

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The scale of water scarcity

The size of the UK's water scarcity issue cannot be underestimated. Population growth, hotter, drier summers and less predictable rainfall due to climate change will increase drought risk and possibly lead to water shortages in the UK.



By 2050, the amount of water available could be reduced by 10-15%, with some rivers seeing 50%-80% less water during summer. Significant water deficits will be seen, particularly in the southeast of England, if we don't reduce demand and increase supply.

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Did you know?

The UK Government estimates that an additional 4,000 megalitres (MI) of water will be needed in England every day by 2050. Defra's vision for reducing water consumption involves a range of measures, including a 20% reduction in public water supply per person by 2038 and for water companies to cut leaks by 50% by 2050.

How to reduce water consumption

A study by the [Bathroom Manufacturers Association \(BMA\)](#) into consumers' bathroom habits and routines found that six in ten people confessed to leaving the tap running whilst washing their hands, and just over four in ten (42%) admitted to leaving the tap running whilst brushing their teeth. Changing simple behaviours like these and reducing shower times can significantly reduce a household's water use while also saving energy and money.

Here are some of the water-efficient products that consumers should consider for their bathrooms.



Low-flow showerheads:

Traditional showerheads can use up to 8 gallons of water per minute, whereas low-flow showerheads use as little as 1.5 gallons per minute. This can result in significant water savings over time without sacrificing the quality of the shower experience.



Dual-flush toilets:

Dual-flush toilets have two buttons, one for liquid waste and one for solid waste, resulting in significant water savings over time, as toilets account for up to 30% of a household's water usage.



Water-efficient taps:

Some water-efficient taps also have aerators, which mix air with water to reduce the flow rate and save water.

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What you should know about Part G

- The Building Regulations in England exist to protect people's safety, health, and welfare in and around buildings. Bathrooms and kitchens can be dangerous, considering hot water from taps and general hygiene, not just in the domestic setting but also in the workplace and other public settings.
- **Approved Document G: Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency** provides guidance on how to meet the regulations for a dwelling's water system, including its cold water supply, water efficiency, hot water supply, sanitary areas, water efficiency and usage, washing facilities and waste water pipes. Water supply pipe rules that cover installation, when a water efficiency calculation is needed and the extra safety measures needed for new or replacement hot water systems are also included.
- Water efficiency calculations estimate water use based on the number of occupants, fixtures, and flow rates in a new or remodelled home. The calculations use the manufacturer's water consumption figures for each fixture. They must comply with Part G regulations, which require average water use to be under 125 litres per person per day (or sometimes 110 litres or less). Trade professionals often use a government-approved calculator to ensure compliance.
- While it is vital that consumers are aware of the Building Regulations when having work done on their property, in many cases, the local building control body will not need to be involved if the works are what is called 'non-notifiable work'. Such works would include simple repairs, maintenance and replacing sanitary items (assuming they use the same amount of water as the old ones).
- For more complex projects, you should consider employing a qualified professional who will undertake and adhere to all the requirements within the regulations and produce any required compliance report, working with Building Control if necessary. Put simply, your safety is at risk if you try to cut corners!
- If you're unsure if your project is exempt, always consult your local authority building control team before starting any work. You can find their contact details [here](#) using the postcode search function.

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Water efficiency advice

This guide's recurring theme is water efficiency. From government interventions to manufacturer designs and building regulations, our need to conserve water is fundamental for our future. While it's a topic that generally only hits the headlines when there are hosepipe bans, it is a daily battle that largely remains unseen.

Underinvestment by water companies and ageing infrastructure has not helped the cause, but we are witnessing improvements in this area with the water regulator Ofwat imposing fines and clear demands for improvement.

If we all work together to reduce our consumption, we will be assured of a future where the taps will always run with clean, wholesome water.

KEY ADVICE

Changing simple behaviours can significantly reduce a household's water use while also saving energy and money.

The NHIC wishes to thank WG2 | Consumer Voice members for contributing to this guide.

Please note that this guidance document produced by the NHIC was correct when created. However, information and regulations may have changed since its publication. Therefore, seeking the most up-to-date information and expert advice is always advisable before making any decisions related to improving your home.

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