



Private Water Supply Checklist - *questions you should ask when looking at a private water supply*

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The questions below are by no means exhaustive and should only be used as a general quick guide when looking at a private water supply. Many supplies will require more in-depth investigation which Case Environmental can provide.

1. What type of supply is it?

Borehole – normally the best type of private supply but very dependent on construction/position.

Well – typically older but can be a good source but normally abstracts shallower water and therefore more susceptible to contamination.

Springs – can also be a good supply but often very poorly constructed and very susceptible to surface contamination. Watch-out for field drain systems wrongly termed springs!

Other – can include high risk supplies such as surface water, mine drainage & rain water, handle with care!

2. Does it supply more than one property?

If it supplies more than one domestic use or any commercial use it will require a risk assessment by the local council. If you are responsible for the supply you will be charged for the risk assessment. The result of the risk assessment may necessitate remedial work.

3. Does it ever get discoloured, particularly after rain?

Any discolouration is a cause for alarm as if it passes through the treatment to the tap and remains discoloured, it will not be disinfected. This will potentially expose the consumer to harmful bacteria.

4. Is the collection chamber/headworks built above or below ground?

If it built below ground it is may suffer problems such as flooding. Above ground construction is much better.

5. Is the chamber (and other associated infrastructure such as tanks and pipe work) in good, clean condition, vermin free and well maintained?

A chamber that is dirty and contains vermin (insects/molluscs etc) is poor practice and may contaminate the water.

6. Is the source fenced to prevent animal access?

Animals present the most common pollution risk to private water supplies. Even healthy livestock will have a variety of harmful pathogen in their faeces.

7. Are any chemicals or fuels stored nearby?

A chemical or fuel spill near a private water source can potentially write-off the supply as it can be very difficult to remove the pollution. Even historic spills can migrate into a water supply.

8. Is any part (connecting pipe/tank/soak-away etc) of a sewerage system within 50 metres of the source?

This is self explanatory – you don't want to be drinking what you or your neighbour has flushed away!

9. Are there any abandoned old water supplies nearby?

A poorly protected old supply can act like a contamination conduit into the aquifer.

10. Is the treatment serviced in accordance to the manufacturer's recommendations?

Many people fit treatment not understanding what it does or that it needs to be serviced – neglecting the treatment can leave it completely ineffective.

11. Is there a recent test certificate and if so, does it include sufficient parameters?

It is good practice at the very minimum to collect a sample each year. This should include microbiology as well as other relevant chemical parameters such as pH, heavy metals and nutrients (and any others deemed applicable). Frequently samples are taken for very limited parameters which reduce the chances of identifying failing components of the water. Ask about the cause of any failures if identified.