

03 / DRINKING WATER

Water hygiene notes

Protecting potable-water pipework during storage, installation and repair.

Revision material for trainees and operatives. This is not a Drinking Water Supply Hygiene qualification, medical clearance or commissioning procedure. Chemical selection, dosing, sampling and release decisions belong to the approved project process and authorised personnel.

Why hygiene matters

New pipework can become contaminated before it carries water. Soil, dirty water, hands, tools, vehicles and unsuitable materials can introduce contamination. Protecting the inside of the system is part of construction quality, not a task left until final disinfection. [1]

Five routes to contamination

- **People.** Follow the site hygiene arrangements. Keep hands, gloves and clothing suitable for clean work. Do not handle water-contact surfaces with dirty hands or gloves.
- **Pipes and fittings.** Keep protective caps and packaging in place until needed. Store clean components off dirty floors and away from contaminants. Check internal cleanliness before installation.
- **Tools and equipment.** Keep water-contact equipment clean and protected. Segregate clean equipment from dirty equipment; uncertain or contaminated items need the approved cleaning/disinfection process before use.
- **The excavation.** Plan work to prevent soil, runoff and dirty water entering exposed pipework. Protect openings during breaks. If contamination occurs, stop and report it.
- **Connections and temporary supplies.** Use only the authorised supply arrangement and required backflow protection. Do not create an improvised connection to the drinking-water network.

People: training and health [1]

The 2025 Water Code requires recognised Drinking Water Supply Hygiene training for operatives working on potable-water systems, with evidence available on site. It also contains health-screening and illness-reporting requirements. The employer must arrange the applicable process with appropriate medical advice; this document cannot certify fitness for work.

Report a known waterborne illness or gastric disorder promptly through the site process. The Code requires affected staff to cease involvement in the installation works and obtain medical clearance before returning. Do not self-clear because symptoms seem to have passed.

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Before, during and after the work

A practical revision sequence based on water-quality protection and commissioning requirements. [1]

Before starting

- **Confirm responsibility.** Know who controls hygiene, authorises connections and receives contamination reports. Check the method statement, applicable code revision and required training evidence.
- **Check the facilities.** Confirm suitable welfare and hand-cleaning arrangements, clean storage and the approved supplies for cleaning/disinfection.
- **Check materials and tools.** Inspect packaging, caps and water-contact surfaces. Keep potable-water equipment protected from wastewater equipment, fuel, oils and other contamination.

During installation or repair

- **Protect open ends.** Minimise exposure and prevent entry of dirt or water. Use the approved protection and work sequence at breaks and shift changes.
- **Keep clean work separate.** Avoid transferring dirt from gloves, tools, vehicles or the ground to water-contact parts. Replace or reprocess contaminated items through the approved procedure.
- **Report a breach immediately.** Identify the affected pipework and tell the supervisor. The Water Code requires suspected contamination incidents to be notified to Uisce Éireann immediately through the responsible project arrangements.

Before commissioning

Cleaning, flushing, disinfection, pressure testing, sampling and connection must follow the approved sequence. Successful pressure testing does not establish microbiological safety. Required sample results and authorisation must be in place before connection or release. [1]

Keep two tasks separate. A PE fusion-surface cleaner is not automatically a drinking-water disinfectant. A disinfectant is not automatically suitable for an electrofusion interface. Use the product, concentration, contact time and sequence specified for each task. Do not mix chemicals or improvise a dose.

This guide deliberately gives no chlorine concentration, contact-time recipe or sampling frequency. These depend on the approved procedure, product instructions, water conditions and project requirements.

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Reporting and revision check

Use these prompts in training or a toolbox discussion; do not use them as a commissioning sign-off.

If contamination is suspected

Stop the affected activity and report it. Prevent further ingress where safe. Identify the affected section and equipment. Record what entered or contacted the system, when it happened, where it occurred and who was notified. Preserve relevant photographs. Follow the authorised remediation, sampling and release decision; do not hide the event by simply rinsing and continuing. [1]

Keep the evidence

Retain the records required by the project: training evidence, material traceability, hygiene checks, incidents and actions, cleaning/disinfection records, test results, sample identification and the authority for connection or return to service. Keep personal medical information in the employer's appropriate confidential process, not in a public joint log.

Check your understanding

A fitting falls into a muddy trench. Fit it after a quick wipe?

No. Hold it and follow the approved assessment and cleaning/disinfection or replacement process.

The pressure test passes. Is the main ready to supply drinking water?

Not on that evidence alone. Water-quality checks and commissioning authorisation are separate requirements.

Can last year's method statement be reused without checking?

No. Confirm the applicable project documents, revisions and site conditions.

Do these notes replace the recognised hygiene course?

No. They support revision only.

Sources, revision and applicability

[1] Uisce Éireann, **Code of Practice for Water Infrastructure**. CDS-5020-03, Revision 3 (2025): section 1.5, hygiene during remedial work, section 4.10 and section 4.16. Main source for these notes.

[Open source](#)

[2] Uisce Éireann, **Technical Guidance for Developers**. Revision 3 applies in full to connection applications received from 16 February 2026; earlier applications are listed separately. Confirm the requirements for the particular project.

[Open source](#)

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