



What is owner/user risk assessment?



This risk assessment for private water supplies is designed to allow real or potential contamination risks to be identified in order that suitable steps can be taken to remove or reduce the dangers.

The risk assessment is primarily concerned with protecting the health of you, your family and those who may visit your home or business.

The risk assessment looks at things that may affect the quality of your drinking water and will enable you to decide if you may have problems with your private water supply.

The risk assessment does not look at the quantity of your supply or whether it will sometimes dry up. If your supply dries up, but starts again after heavy rain, then it may be collecting run-off water which may be contaminated.

If you think this may be happening then you should consider having your supply investigated more thoroughly.

There are two main groups of impurities that can affect drinking water quality – micro-organisms and chemicals.

- If some micro-organisms such as *Campylobacter* or *E. coli* O157 are present in your drinking water then these will pose an immediate risk to your health and the health of your family or visitors. This can include immediate effects (severe sickness and diarrhoea) and occasionally serious long-term illness, such as kidney failure, and very uncommonly, death.
- The presence of some very rare chemicals in your drinking water may lead to an increased risk of poisoning or developing cancer if the water is consumed over a long period of time. Other chemicals such as iron or manganese may make the water look or taste unpleasant and can cause clothes to be badly stained when they are washed.

A user/owner risk assessment is one where the owner or user of the private water supply can assess potential risks to their supply by completing a simple form.

If you think you have problems, then the next step will be to have a full risk assessment undertaken.

You can do this yourself but you will probably need the help of a suitably qualified and experienced professional such as an environmental health officer.

Your local environmental health service will have staff who can arrange to undertake a full risk assessment or to assist you in completing one yourself. Details of your local environmental health service can be found on the back cover of this Information Guide or in your local telephone book.

