

## Did you know?

- Water can be a source of **disease**-causing microorganisms and **harmful** chemicals.
- There have been serious outbreaks of **illness** as a result of people drinking contaminated water from private supplies.
- Water supplies can become contaminated from many sources including sewage overflows, septic tanks, birds and animals and their droppings, fertilisers, pesticides and roofing materials such as lead flashings and lead-based paints.

## What is my responsibility ?

- Private water supply operators have a **responsibility** to provide water that is safe to use. If the water is contaminated, or is not monitored or not treated, then consumers need to be warned.
- Businesses using a private water supply to prepare food for others are obliged under the *Foods Standards Code* to use potable (drinkable) water. If a business does not have a potable supply, it must be able to demonstrate that the water used is **safe**.
- Under the *Public Health Act 2010* and the *Public Health Regulation 2012*, drinking water suppliers including private water suppliers are required to develop and adhere to a risk-based drinking water management plan from 1 September 2014. The plan must identify risks in the water supply, how they can be prevented or fixed, and how you know they have been controlled, for example by results of monitoring.

## About NSW FASS

NSW FASS is a network within NSW Health Pathology.

Our expertise in analytical science is utilised by both the NSW Government and the private sector.

The Laboratories have extensive experience in the analysis of all types of water.

NSW FASS conducts more than 110,000 tests annually on water samples.

The water testing laboratories are accredited with NATA in the fields of biological and chemical testing.

To enquire about testing of private water supplies or to obtain a quotation , please contact:

**NSW Forensic & Analytical  
Science Service**

**PO Box 162**

**Lidcombe NSW 2141**

**Phone: 02 9646 0222**

**Fax: 02 9646 0333**

# Testing of Private Water Supplies

**NSW Forensic &  
Analytical Science  
Service**



**Health  
Pathology**

## Who does this information apply to?

This information is for any business or facility that supplies drinking water from an independent water source (i.e. not town water supplied by a water utility or local council) to the public and/or employees.

Private water supply operators may include individuals, government agencies, community organisations or businesses.

Examples of premises that may have a private water supply include:

- Caravan parks
- Motels and hotels
- Bed and breakfast establishments
- Cafes and restaurants
- Guest houses
- Farm stay establishments
- Roadhouses and petrol stations
- Camping grounds
- Sporting and recreational premises
- Schools and school camps
- Conference centres
- Worksites and mines
- Tourist facilities.

Private water supplies can include water from rainwater tanks, dams, bores, rivers and creeks.

## Water testing

NSW Health recommends operators of private water supplies regularly **test** the quality of their drinking water. To demonstrate safety of the water supply the results of testing must comply with the *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines*.

Monitoring is an essential part of good water management. The results indicate whether barriers to contamination are working properly.

### The NSW FASS water testing service

The NSW Forensic & Analytical Science Service (NSW FASS) can provide **microbiological, physical and chemical** analysis of your private water supply.

Microbiological quality is determined by testing for *Escherichia coli*, as an indicator of faecal contamination and the possible presence of enteric disease-causing microorganisms.

The chemical and physical quality of a water sample is assessed by analysis of over 30 different characteristics. Analysis includes testing for common contaminants such as iron, lead, zinc and copper.



## Our water testing service includes:

- Sample bottles for all analyses
- Illustrated sheets showing how to take samples
- Insulated cooler and freezer bricks
- Address label for return of the cooler to the laboratory
- Testing by National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA) accredited laboratories
- NATA-endorsed report
- Guide to interpreting the test results.

### What happens if my test results do not comply?

If results are non-compliant, you may want to follow up with your local Public Health Unit (PHU) of the NSW Ministry of Health. The PHU will be able to provide further interpretation of the test results and give advice on possible sources of contamination, and how to improve water quality. NSW FASS can supply you with contact details for your local PHU.

### What is the cost?

Microbiological analysis is \$38.50.

Chemical analysis is \$198.

A sampling kit (including delivery) may be purchased for \$33.

All prices include GST.

NSW FASS can also analyse samples for pesticides and other organic contaminants.