

CLEANSING AND DISINFECTION OF PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

1 Why is it desirable to disinfect a private water supply ?

Depending on weather conditions, most private water supplies have at some time small particles of suspended solids in the water which separate out on standing, thus causing a layer of silt to be deposited in the system. This silt provides a medium in which bacteria can survive.

2 How often should the supply be disinfected ?

Annually will suffice, but more frequently if necessary, e.g. after heavy rain when the water has run brown.

3 What do I use to disinfect the system ?

Sodium hypochlorite is a chlorine based disinfectant suitable for carrying out such a process. Household bleaches such as Domestos will do the same job but they contain many additives and are not recommended. However, Milton can be used as an alternative.

4 Where can I buy this disinfectant and how much will it cost me ?

Sodium hypochlorite is available in 25 litre and sometimes 10 litre containers. It can be purchased from most farm supply shops and 25 litres will cost in the region of £10.00.

5 How do I use this disinfectant ?

Before applying the sodium hypochlorite concentrate to the relevant part of the systems, dilute it at a rate of 1 part concentrate to 5 parts water.

If disinfecting a well or borehole, pour approximately 30 litres of dilute hypochlorite down the well or borehole and leave it to stand for at least 2 hours. Then start pumping and allow the chlorinated water to circulate through the internal plumbing system. Allow the chlorinated water to remain in the system for at least 2 hours before letting it run to waste.

If it is only tanks and pipework that are to be disinfected, then follow the same procedure but add the dilute hypochlorite to the header tank or storage reservoir after having first cleaned out any sediment or debris which may be present. NB: the total amount of dilute hypochlorite will need to be adjusted according to the size of the tank, e.g. if only a small tank is to be disinfected, then half or even a quarter of the amount of hypochlorite may be used. If using Milton the amount required is relative to the level of contamination and the size of the water storage tank, i.e. for a tank size 100 litres.

NB *This disinfection procedure should not be viewed as being an alternative to treating a polluted supply. It is to be used in conjunction with the carrying out of remedial works to prevent pollution of the supply, and/or the installation of a water treatment unit such as an ultra violet light or a filtration system.*