

Business Continuity advice for non-domestic customers



Background

We all expect water to come out of the tap whenever we turn it on, and whilst this is normally the case very occasionally there may be a disruption to your supply as we deal with operational issues such as burst pipes.

The following information contains useful guidance which you may want to consider as part of your Business Continuity planning. This has been issued via Local Resilience Forums to support the Civil Contingencies Act requirement of the promotion of Business Continuity within the local community.

What should I plan for?

In most cases disruption to your water supply will last no more than a few hours. However, in some circumstances it may take longer for the problem to be fixed. We recommend that your plans should cover interruptions lasting up to 36 hours.

What support can I expect from Severn Trent Water?

As soon as we are aware of a supply problem we will work to restore supplies, which may include rezoning our network to provide water via a different route whilst the problem is being fixed – a bit like a diversion being set up around a road closure. If the supply cannot be restored for an extended period we will look to provide alternative water supplies to affected customers using bottled water, bowsers or tankers.

In line with our regulations when deploying alternative supplies we will prioritise domestic customers, especially those who are recognised as vulnerable, and sensitive non-domestic customers such as hospitals and prisons. Therefore Business Continuity plans for non-domestic customers should not rely on receiving an alternative supply from Severn Trent Water.

During a planned supply interruption for maintenance of our network we will give you at least three days notice, normally in writing, to allow you time to prepare.

What should I consider in my plan?

The contents of your plan will depend on your individual circumstances: however, the following should be useful prompts.

Fire Are your fire suppression systems (such as sprinklers) fed from stored water or directly from the mains supply? If building and fire regulations require you to have working fire suppression systems to operate then consider whether storage-fed systems are an option.

Toilets Are your toilets supplied from stored water or directly from the mains supply? If storage is not an option, consider providing temporary chemical toilets. You should check that any contract to supply such facilities also includes maintaining and emptying them whilst deployed, and whether you can guarantee their supply during an interruption and at short notice.

<i>Drinking water</i>	Will you need to supply drinking water to your staff and customers? Be aware that bottled water has a use-by date and holding a large stock of it would only be advisable if you can guarantee turnover. If you need a large volume of bottled water it may be possible to arrange a contingency supply contract with a bottled water supplier or one of the supermarket chains. Not all bottled water is suitable for babies and very young children due to the salt and mineral content.
<i>Catering</i>	Unless they are supplied from storage it is unlikely that catering facilities will be able to operate. Consider alternatives if catering is required.
<i>Business processes</i>	If your business processes require water to operate, consider whether water storage can give you sufficient volumes to cover the interruption period.
<i>Grey water</i>	Be aware that not all stored water is fit for human consumption. Where it is not, this may be due to it coming from a non potable source (such as an industrial borehole), or due to storage or plumbing arrangements. Such systems can be used for toilet flushing, fire suppression and some business processes.
<i>Plumbing</i>	Ensure your internal plumbing is regularly maintained and has been checked for any misconnections between systems. During a supply interruption any such misconnections could result in your storage being used unexpectedly. This can also prevent any possible contamination of your drinking water supplies from non-potable sections of your plumbing system.
<i>Prioritise water use</i>	Look at all the uses of water in your premises and consider which can be stopped for the duration to ensure the water you have available can be used for essential purposes for as long as possible. If you use less, you'll need less.

Water efficiency

If you have on-site storage there are several options that can help lengthen the time your storage will last. These have the added benefit of reducing your day to day water usage which can help to reduce your water bills.

- Monitor your water use on a regular basis. Thousands of pounds a year can be wasted through leaking pipes, overflowing toilets, dripping taps and unmaintained urinal controls.
- Older toilets tend to be single flush. These use all the water in the cistern every time they are flushed. You can either retrofit the toilet with a dual flush device or install a save-a-flush to reduce water use which can be obtained for free from www.stwater.co.uk.
- Make sure that urinals have flush controls, which will stop them flushing when people are not using them. Consider whether the frequency of flushing can be reduced and hygiene still maintained, the default when systems are installed is often higher than necessary.
- Consider whether other water-saving devices such as automatic shut-off taps and water efficient showers heads can be installed.
- Communicate the water efficiency message to staff and customers to encourage best practice.

Further information

For further information including water efficiency advice please go to www.stwater.co.uk.