

# Policy statement

## Clarifying drinking water supplier responsibilities for end-point treatment

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This policy statement clarifies the views of the Water Services Authority–Taumata Arowai (the Authority) on drinking water supplier responsibilities for end-point treatment under an acceptable solution.

### What is an acceptable solution?

Drinking water suppliers must supply safe drinking water to their communities, unless an exemption is obtained. They have options to ensure that happens:

- provide centralised treatment, following the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules and preparing a drinking water safety plan for the supply
- treating water at the building(s) where it is consumed with an end-point treatment system, following an acceptable solution.

Acceptable solutions are currently available for three types of drinking water supplies: roof, spring and bore, and mixed-use rural.

A key feature of acceptable solutions is that drinking water is not provided through a centralised treatment system and distribution network. Instead, water is treated to make it safe by equipment which meets the acceptable solution installed at **each home, or property with a small number of buildings**, where people will drink it. This is referred to as an “end-point treatment” approach.

### What does ‘mixed-use rural supply’ mean?

Supplies are classified as ‘mixed-use rural’ if at least 50% of water supplied is for farm (e.g. stock or irrigation) use and up to 50% is used as drinking water.

Owners and operators of mixed-use rural supplies are drinking water suppliers under the Water Services Act 2021.

### More information

Information about acceptable solutions is available at: [taumataarowai.govt.nz/acceptable-solutions](https://taumataarowai.govt.nz/acceptable-solutions).

## End-point treatment requirements

All acceptable solutions require installation of an end-point treatment system (filtration and UV) where the water is used for drinking. Minimum requirements for end-point treatment systems are specified and there are conditions on how many buildings and people can use the water treated by an end-point treatment system.<sup>1</sup>

The supplier is responsible for the installation, testing and maintenance of end-point treatment systems.<sup>2</sup> To meet this responsibility, the supplier can either implement end-point treatment themselves (with a right to reimbursement from the premises owner) or require a premises owner to do so.<sup>3</sup>

Using an acceptable solution may involve installation and maintenance of an end-point treatment system on someone else’s private land. Testing treated water leaving an end-point treatment system is required. This could be done by either the supplier (with appropriate consent) or the consumer/premises owner.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, [Drinking-Water-Acceptable-Solution-for-Mixed-use-Rural-Water-Supplies-v4 \(2\).pdf](#), at paras 1.2.2 and 1.2.3.

<sup>2</sup> For example, [Drinking-Water-Acceptable-Solution-for-Mixed-use-Rural-Water-Supplies-v4 \(3\).pdf](#), at paras 1.2.1.(b) and 3.

<sup>3</sup> Water Services Act 2021, [s 28\(3\)\(b\)](#). ‘Implement’ here means the installation, maintenance and ongoing testing of an end-point treatment system.

## The Authority's position on suppliers meeting their end-point treatment duties

Visit [taumataarowai.govt.nz/acceptable-solutions](https://taumataarowai.govt.nz/acceptable-solutions) for a flow chart that maps the steps below.

The Authority will usually consider a supplier has met their end-point treatment responsibilities if the following applies:

- the supplier has sought to provide, or to require a premises owner to provide, an end-point treatment system to meet the requirements of an acceptable solution, *and*
- if the premises owner does not cooperate or agree, the supplier has taken all reasonably practicable steps to try to meet the relevant requirements of the acceptable solution and the Water Services Act.

**All reasonably practicable steps means that the following actions have been taken:**

- 1 The supplier has written to the premises owner:
  - 1A to arrange installation, maintenance and ongoing testing of the end-point treatment system by the supplier (the supplier may require cost reimbursement from the premises owner), *or*
  - 1B requiring the premises owner to install, maintain and carry out ongoing testing of an end-point treatment in accordance with the requirements of the acceptable solution.
- 2 The supplier has then made reasonable efforts to:
  - 2A obtain the premises owner's agreement for the supplier to implement the end-point treatment system, *or*
  - 2B see if the premises owner has done the same.
- 3 If, despite reasonable efforts, the supplier has not been able to obtain the premises owner's agreement or to otherwise confirm that the premises owner has implemented an end-point treatment system, the supplier has then:
  - 3A communicated to the premises owner that they need to implement an end-point treatment system, and that consumers must boil water until an end-point treatment system is implemented
  - 3B requested evidence such as a photograph, invoice or receipt that shows a compliant system has been implemented; this includes providing the serial number of the system.
- 4 The supplier has emailed the Authority at [OpsSupport@taumataarowai.govt.nz](mailto:OpsSupport@taumataarowai.govt.nz) to let us know:
  - 4A the premises owner has refused access and/or will not confirm whether an effective end-point treatment system has been implemented (including appropriate maintenance and ongoing testing), and
  - 4B the supplier has informed the premises owner to boil water until an end-point treatment system is implemented.

The drinking water supplier should have arrangements in place to ensure it's promptly informed when a premises owner:

- changes their use of water (for example, to start or stop using it as drinking water)
- materially changes their end-point treatment system or how it operates
- there is a change in premises ownership.

**To avoid doubt, a supplier does not need to take any further action relating to end-point treatment if a premises owner has communicated to the supplier that they:**

- are only using the water supplied for farming or other purposes, not for drinking water, and they have an alternative supply for drinking water (such as rainwater tanks), *or*
- have installed an end-point treatment system for their drinking water that meets the requirements of the acceptable solution and are maintaining it and testing as required and satisfactory evidence is provided (such as a photograph, invoice or receipt that shows a compliant system has been installed; this includes providing the serial number of the system).

## **If you have questions**

If you have questions about this policy statement, please email us at [OpsSupport@taumataarowai.govt.nz](mailto:OpsSupport@taumataarowai.govt.nz).

This policy statement is a guideline only and reflects the Authority's views. It is not intended to be definitive and is not legal advice. The Authority reserves the right to depart from the approach set out in this policy statement in appropriate circumstances and to adjust the approach, including in response to changes in legislation or court decisions. Drinking water suppliers are responsible for understanding and complying with their legislative duties.