

Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham B5 4UA  
21 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3HF

By email

5 June 2020

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 - Request For Information

Reference: FOI 202005058

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for the following information

Can you provide me with the minimum water pressures Water Companies are required to provide over the past 20years?

The legal duty regarding water pressure is set out in section 65 of the Water Industry Act 1991 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/56/section/65>

This states:

“1) Subject to the following provisions of this section, it shall be the duty of a water undertaker to cause the water in such of its water mains and other pipes as— (a) are used for providing supplies of water for domestic purposes; or (b) have fire-hydrants fixed on them, to be laid on constantly and at such a pressure as will cause the water to reach to the top of the top-most storey of every building within the undertaker’s area.

2) Nothing in subsection (1) above shall require a water undertaker to provide a supply of water at a height greater than that to which it will flow by gravitation through its water mains from the service reservoir or tank from which that supply is taken.”

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However, effectively, this is supplemented by the requirements set out in the Water Supply and Sewerage services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008 which state:

“10.—(1) A water undertaker must maintain, in a communication pipe serving premises supplied with water, a minimum water pressure of seven metres static head.

(2) If in a period of 28 days the pressure in the communication pipe serving a customer’s premises falls below seven metres static head on two occasions each lasting one hour or longer, the undertaker must, except in the circumstances described in paragraph (3), pay the customer £25.

(3) Paragraph (2) does not apply if the pressure falls below seven metres static head in connection with the carrying out of necessary works or because of drought.”

Here is a [link](#) to our website for information on Water Pressure and a document “The Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS)” on this [link](#). This gives more detail on low pressure in section 5.

The seven metre pressure requirement was first introduced by the 1996 amendment to the (original) *Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 1989*.

In practice the industry works to a higher minimum standard (commonly termed the ‘reference level’) than the legal minimum. This is explained by Water UK on the Discover Water website as being the “equivalent to being able to fill a 15 litre bucket in 100 seconds. Technically, this is 10 metres head of pressure at a boundary stop tap with a flow of 9 litres per minute.

<https://discoverwater.co.uk/>

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Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Records Management Assistant