



CITY OF CAPE TOWN  
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA  
STAD KAAPSTAD



## **SUMMARY GUIDE TO THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN'S WATER BY-LAW**

This booklet gives you a summarised guide to the 2010 Water By-law and 2018 Amendment Water By-law update. It aims to provide greater understanding of this important regulation for all residents, property owners, plumbers, builders and built environment professionals in the City of Cape Town.

Making progress possible. Together.



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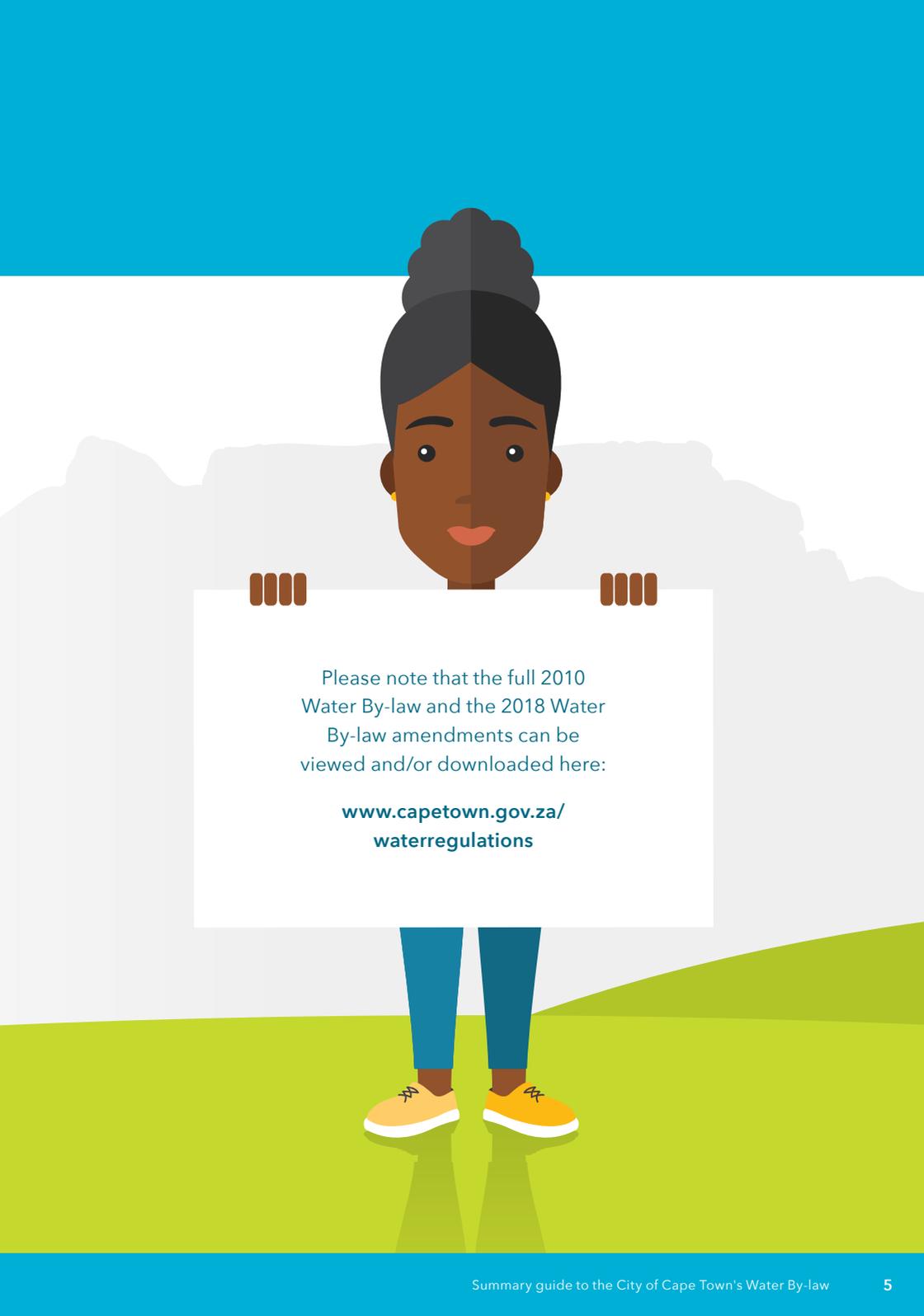
# WHAT IS THE WATER BY-LAW?

The City of Cape Town's Water By-law is a legal document that outlines everything to do with the usage of municipal drinking water and alternative water within the City.

From plumbing regulations to the installation of storage tanks, the By-law informs residents, property owners, plumbers, builders and built environment professionals about how they can go about using water generally, the use of certified materials and what measures need to be put in place under certain circumstances.

Although as responsible citizens everyone should read and become familiar with the Water By-laws documentation, it is long, and includes some technical and legal terminology. So we've put together this user-friendly guide that summarises and simplifies key provisions of the Water By-law, but does not replace it. It has various sections intended for different audiences. We encourage you to read the first section 'What everyone needs to know' and then flip through the booklet to see whether any of the other sections apply to you too.

**We hope you find this summary useful.**

A stylized illustration of a woman with dark skin and hair pulled up in a bun, wearing blue jeans and yellow sneakers. She is holding a large white rectangular sign in front of her. The background features a blue sky at the top, a light grey mountain range in the middle, and a green grassy field at the bottom. The sign contains text about water by-laws and a website link.

Please note that the full 2010  
Water By-law and the 2018 Water  
By-law amendments can be  
viewed and/or downloaded here:

**[www.capetown.gov.za/  
waterregulations](http://www.capetown.gov.za/waterregulations)**

# WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW

## Using water in the City of Cape Town



✘ **No unauthorised connection to the City's water supply system**, as this is considered theft and in the event you get caught, you will receive a fine and be liable to pay for the water used and the City may take further legal action and claim further damages.



✘ **No selling of municipal drinking water**. However, landlords are allowed to charge tenants for water they've used on their property, in line with the City's water consumptive tariffs.



✘ **No purposeful or negligent wastage of water**. Any leaks that you become aware of, or that are brought to your attention on your property, or the property that you're staying on, must be fixed as soon as possible. Should you see any leaks elsewhere, e.g. in the street, please report them.

See the back cover of this booklet for reporting channels.

## Water supply conditions



✘ **No tampering with the City's water supply system, meters, pipes or stopcocks in any way**, unless authorised to do so. Connecting pumps directly to the municipal system is not allowed.



**The City cannot guarantee to maintain a specific water pressure or flow rate**. Sometimes the water pressure will drop and other times the water flow could be restricted altogether, e.g. during maintenance in the area. However, if you are without water for more than 24 hours, the City will do their best to supply you with water.



**When the water supply to the City is running low (e.g. in a drought), you may have to reduce your usage.** Anyone who fails to use less water during these periods of water restrictions could receive a fine or even be imprisoned.

## Using alternative water



**✘ No alternative water source can be used for drinking, cooking (and food preparation) or ablution (body washing), due to potential health risks.** Only municipal drinking water can be used for these purposes. The only exceptions for this are a few large consumers who contract with the City to operate as Water Service Intermediaries, under strict criteria and conditions.



All installation of systems using any form of alternative water - grey water, groundwater, rain water etc, and in particular those that are intended to be connected to the City's water supply network - **must be approved by the City.**



Alternative water can be used to flush toilets and for a few other permitted uses. But certain measures need to be taken, especially to ensure you don't contaminate the drinking water on your property or that of the municipal water supply. The approved **backflow prevention must be installed.**

For more info see the guidelines for the installation of alternative water systems, visit <http://cct.gov.za/AIBNI>

## Groundwater & surface water

You need to give the City two weeks' notice before you plan to sink a borehole, well or wellpoint. (Note that authorisation may also be needed from the National Department of Water and Sanitation to use groundwater, depending on factors such as how much is to be used, and what for etc.)

If you're using borehole or wellpoint water you need to install a meter/s and keep a record of the amount of water used.

If you want to use water from streams, rivers, dams or lakes, you need to get authorisation from the National Department of Water and Sanitation.

For more info, see the guidelines for the installation of alternative water systems at <http://cct.gov.za/AIBNI>

### Did you know?

**No irrigation is permitted between 9am and 6pm** for the watering of gardens, fields, parks or any other grassed area.

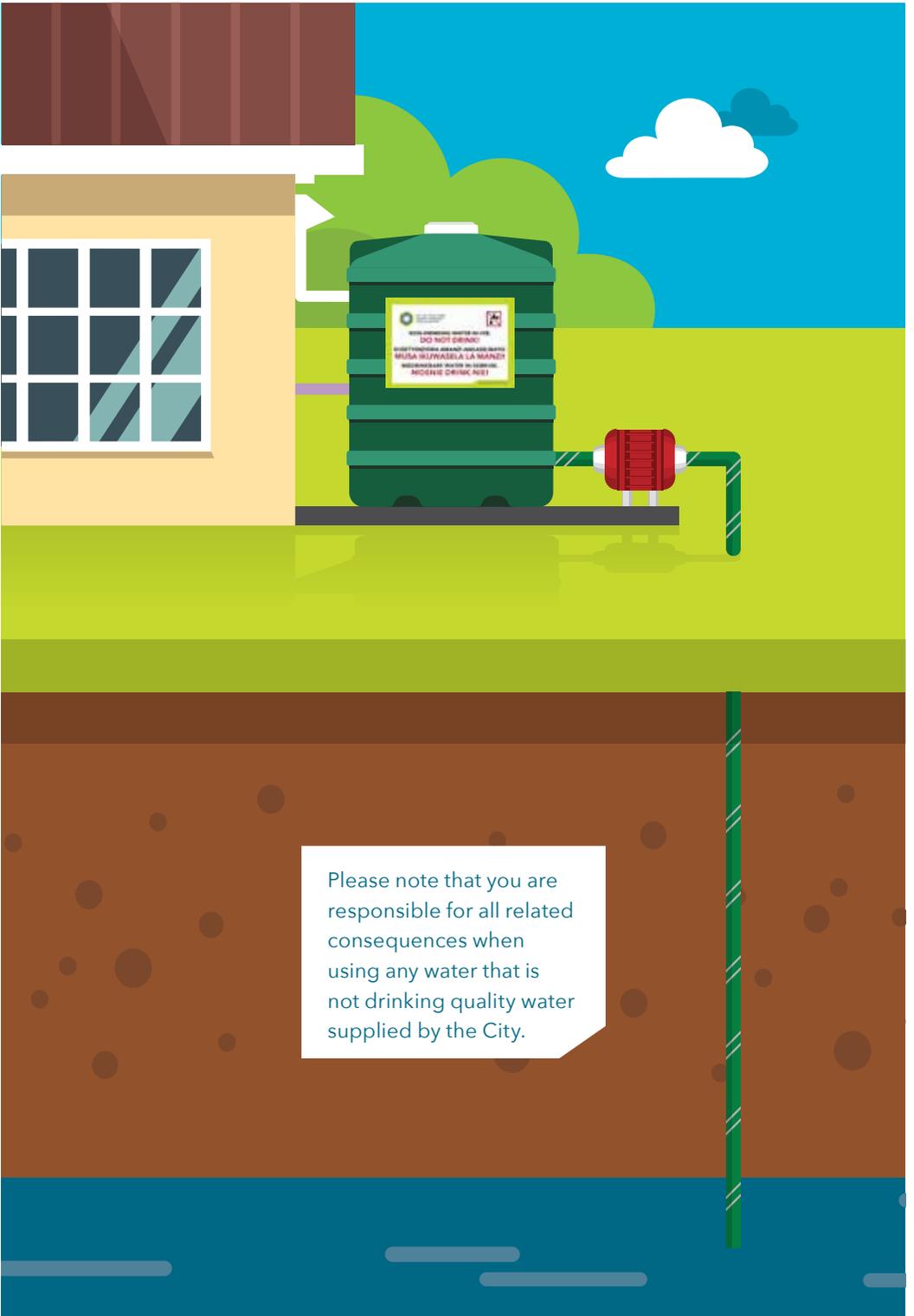
**No hosing down of paved areas and hard surfaces using municipal drinking water is permitted.**

When water restriction levels permit, **hosepipes used for washing vehicles, boats and caravans must be fitted with an automatic self-closing device** to prevent water wastage.

**6 litres flushing capacity is the maximum** for a new toilet cistern.

7 litres per minute is the **maximum flow rate** for new showerheads.

All **swimming pools** using municipal water must be covered by a solid pool cover when they are not being used. Pool covers are also encouraged when alternative water is used e.g. rainwater.



Please note that you are responsible for all related consequences when using any water that is not drinking quality water supplied by the City.

# PROPERTY OWNERS

## Buying a home?

Your new property must have a water connection with a municipal meter installed by the City. It is your responsibility to contact the City and apply for one to be installed. See back cover for contact details.



## A property with multiple units

You must install a private isolating valve (stopcock) and either a private sub-meter, a water management device or a prepayment meter to each unit, at your own cost.

## Storage of water

The following kind of buildings must store a minimum quantity of water for use when there are water outages, over-and-above water stored for fire-fighting and air conditioning:

- Hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, old age homes and other buildings from which the occupants cannot easily be moved if water supply gets interrupted
- Educational institutions
- Hotels, boarding houses and hostels
- Hairdressers and dentists
- Industry and factories (for production purposes)
- Multiple story dwelling units (flats, apartment block) exceeding 3 floors
- Commercial premises including shops, large retail malls and offices



If you have a water storage tank on your property, it needs to be drained, inspected and disinfected every five years for hygiene purposes. Please also note: your storage tank should be resistant to ultra-violet (UV) light so that it cannot be damaged by direct sunlight and growth of algae is prevented.



## Installation and changes to hot water systems

If you alter, replace or install a new water heater (geyser), heat pump, solar water heating system or any protective device/s, you need to inform the City. See back cover for reporting channels.

## Installing an alternative water system?

All plumbing installation work must be done by a qualified plumber, and must comply with the SANS standards and a City-registered plumber must issue a Certificate of Approval for the final installation, or any changes to it.

If you install a wellpoint, borehole or any other system used to extract groundwater, you are required to register it with the City. After it has been registered, it is your responsibility to use the water sparingly.

To find a plumber registered with the City, and for the detailed guidelines for the installation of alternative water systems at <http://cct.gov.za/AIBNI>

## Selling your property?

Before you sell your property, you must get a City-registered plumber to inspect your plumbing installation and issue a plumbing Certificate of Compliance (CoC) if it is compliant. Note that the plumbing CoC must be given to your transferring attorney and they must submit it to the City at [certificateofcompliance@capetown.gov.za](mailto:certificateofcompliance@capetown.gov.za)

Visit [www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater](http://www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater) to find the list of City-registered plumbers.





## Did you know?

All fire prevention installations that include fire hose reels, fire hydrants, fire extinguishers and fire sprinklers on your property need be approved by the City's Fire Department - visit [www.capetown.gov.za/FireandRescue](http://www.capetown.gov.za/FireandRescue) to get your Certificate of Approval.

If you have faulty pipes or leaks on your property, you are responsible for repairing them as soon as you become aware of the water loss. (Note that leaks are often not easy to see e.g. if underground, so check movement on your meter regularly to alert you to leaks). If you don't fix leaks you're aware of, the City will issue a fine, charge you for the water wasted and may restrict your supply. See guide to finding and fixing leaks at [www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater](http://www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater)

The City cannot guarantee to maintain a specific water pressure or flow rate to your property - your water pressure can drop or your supply can be cut off altogether for various reasons e.g. maintenance in the area.

The City will cut off or restrict your water supply if you don't pay your water bill. However the City will give you notice before doing so, and will reconnect you once you've paid or made an arrangement to pay off what you owe. **NB:** The City will levy a charge for disconnecting and reconnecting your water supply.

If you suspect that your water consumption is very high, first check if there is a leak. If you can't find a leak and suspect the meter might be faulty, you can report it and request an inspection, and apply to have the meter tested. Note that a fee is payable for meter testing, at any one of the City's walk-in Customer Interaction Centres. See list of these centres at: [www.capetown.gov.za/facilities](http://www.capetown.gov.za/facilities)

# PLUMBERS

## Registering with the City

If you are qualified and accredited in terms of the National Qualifications Framework Act of 2008, you may register with the City. Only City-registered plumbers may issue Certificates of Compliance/Approval.

To register, call 0860 103 089, or email [certificateofcompliance@capetown.gov.za](mailto:certificateofcompliance@capetown.gov.za)

## Your responsibilities as a registered plumber

If you are registered with the City, all plumbing work undertaken by you - or anyone under your supervision - must comply with the Water By-law(s). You are also required to submit the following documents to [certificateofcompliance@capetown.gov.za](mailto:certificateofcompliance@capetown.gov.za):

- Certificates of Compliance for the transfer of ownership of a property.
- Certificates of Approval for new or altered water installations.
- Certificates of Approval for the use and installation of alternative water systems, or any changes to the installation.





## Not qualified?

If you are not qualified and accredited in terms of the National Qualifications Framework Act of 2008, you are not allowed to do any of the following, unless working under the supervision of a registered plumber:

- replace fixed water heaters (geysers, heat pumps or solar systems) and their protective devices;
- inspect, disinfect or test fire installations or storage tanks; or
- service, replace or repair backflow preventers.

You may undertake work on new or altered water installations, or on the installation of (or changes to) alternative water systems which require a Certificate of Approval (CoA), but only under the supervision of a registered plumber who must sign off on that CoA. However, only registered plumbers may undertake the work and sign off on the Certificate of Compliance for the transfer of ownership of a property.

### Did you know?

The City can deregister and remove plumbers from the City's plumber database if you fail to comply with the requirements of the By-law. This will also apply if you falsely or misleadingly issue Certificates of Compliance/Approval or allow your registration details to be used in a fraudulent manner.

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONALS

## New developments and additions

All new developments and any additions/refurbishments to buildings must include the installation of water conservation or alternative water systems (e.g. grey water re-use, groundwater or rain water harvesting) i.e. systems for non-drinking purposes like toilet flushing, irrigation, swimming pool filling etc. You must include full details thereof on your building plans when you submit them for approval.

A list of water conservation requirements is found in Schedule 1 of the Water Amended By-law.

For more info, see the guidelines for the installation of alternative water systems at <http://cct.gov.za/AIBNI>



## What to include in your drawings

If water installations are identical across multiple floors of a building, you only need to draw them once. However, if you are planning to install various water systems across multiple floors, you are required to indicate this in your drawings.

Each drawing you complete must also include a table that shows how many terminal water fittings there are and what size they will be.



# PLUMBERS, BUILDERS & BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONALS

## Water installations

All water installations, hot water cylinders, solar panels (systems), heat pumps and water tanks used must comply with the relevant SANS standards.

You also have to ensure that non-return valves are used in all water installations. Reduced Pressure Zone (RPZ) valves installed above ground are used for backflow prevention for alternative water systems. These valves must be positioned immediately after the property's private isolating valve (stopcock).

For more info, see the guidelines for the installation of alternative water systems at <http://cct.gov.za/AIBNI>

## City's water meters

As you're probably well aware, all water used from the City's water supply system must pass through a water meter. You are not allowed to tamper with a water meter or break its seal; only the City and its appointed contractors may work on these meters.

## City's isolating valves

You are not allowed to interfere with City's isolating valves unless the City has given you permission to do so. To request permission to move or adjust an isolating valve, please contact the City.

See the back cover for contact details.



### Did you know?

Public hand wash basins should be fitted with demand-type taps, and public showers should be fitted with demand-type valves.

#### **Taps located outside non-residential buildings must have a:**

- self-closing device;
- removable handle;
- locking device to prevent unauthorised used; or
- demand-type that limits how much water is released in a single operation.

You are not allowed to install automatic urinal flushing systems - all urinals must be fitted with manually operated flushing systems, non-manual systems that flush only after a urinal has been used or waterless systems that are well maintained.

All pipes and water fittings you use must comply with the relevant SANS specifications. Refer to Schedule 2 of the By-law for info regarding the use of copper, plastic, steel and multilayer pipes.



# THINK WATER

CARE A LITTLE. SAVE A LOT.

For any queries on the Water By-law, and for water and sanitation-related applications and reporting, you can reach the City through any ONE of these channels:

- Online at [www.capetown.gov.za/servicerequests](http://www.capetown.gov.za/servicerequests)
- Email [water@capetown.gov.za](mailto:water@capetown.gov.za)
- SMS **31373** (maximum of 160 characters)
- Call **0860 103 089**
- Visit a Customer Interaction Centre - for the complete list, see [www.capetown.gov.za/facilities](http://www.capetown.gov.za/facilities)

Stick to one of these channels for a faster response, and always get a reference number.

May 2019. Please note the Water By-law may be updated in future. Updates will be on the City's website at [www.capetown.gov.za/waterregulations](http://www.capetown.gov.za/waterregulations)



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