

ATCM NEWS

ATCM MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR COLD WATER STORAGE TANKS AND CISTERNS

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1. THE PURPOSE

This ATCM document details the procedures for the inspection, maintenance and cleaning of water storage tanks and cisterns. Its aim is to encourage compliance with UK legislation, uphold water quality and safety standards as well protecting operatives and end users from potential hazards.



2. THE SCOPE

These procedures cover:

- Regular visual and technical inspections of water storage tanks and cisterns. These be done 6 monthly or at a schedule to suit stakeholder requirements scheduling any actions from inspection..
- Scheduled cleaning and disinfection activities.
- Water quality testing following cleaning.
- Record keeping and documentation.
- Risk management, including Legionella control and chemical handling.

They are a guidance from the ATCM which apply to water tank installations and should be followed by any contractors or personnel involved.



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3. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION, STANDARDS, AND CODES OF PRACTICE

Projects and procedures described should adhere to and be periodically reviewed in line with some or all of the following:

- Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 – Governing water fittings to prevent contamination.
- Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) L8 – Guidelines for controlling Legionella bacteria in water systems.
- BS EN 806 – Specifications for water supply systems inside buildings.
- BS 8558 – Guidance on the operation and maintenance of water systems.
- COSHH Regulations 2002 – Handling and use of cleaning chemicals safely.
- Confined Spaces Regulations 1997 – Safe working practices in confined spaces, if applicable.
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 – Safe handling of heavy or awkward loads.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work Regulations 1992 – Use and maintenance of protective gear.



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4 .ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Maintenance Manager/Supervisor:**
 - Oversee compliance with the cleaning and inspection schedule.
 - Ensure all personnel are trained and adhere to safety protocols.
- **Trained Personnel/Contractors:**
 - Carry out inspections and cleaning as outlined.
 - Follow safe working practices and use PPE as required.
- **Health and Safety Officer:**
 - Update risk assessments and method statements as regulations change.
 - Monitor water quality testing results and maintenance logs.
- **Administrative Staff:**
 - Maintain records of inspections, cleaning activities, and water quality reports.
 - Arrange training and review sessions.

5. INSPECTION PROCEDURE

5.1 Visual Inspection

- Frequency: At least every six months or more frequently if required.
- Tasks:
 - Ensure access to and around the tank/cistern is kept clear.
 - Examine the tank/cistern for structural integrity, signs of corrosion, or leaks.
 - Check the condition and security of lids, access points and covers.
 - Check the condition and security of any internal supports and that they are in position at point of initial installation. Any hollow supports must be replaced.
 - Check insulation, if applicable, remains intact and secure.
 - Look for buildup of debris, sludge, or biofilm on internal walls and bottom of internal surface.
 - Check the condition of base support structures for wear, corrosion and subsequently any deflection out with tolerance.
 - Determine that the water category meets the level of



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5. INSPECTION PROCEDURE CONT...

5.2 Functional Testing

- Inspect all components (valves, overflow systems, inlets/outlets) to ensure proper function in line with BS EN 806.
- The temperature of the tank/cistern should be inspected.
- Test disinfection residuals and pH levels to ensure water quality standards are met.

5.3 Water Quality Testing

- Scope:
 - Microbiological analysis (including Legionella testing as recommended by ACOP L8).
 - Chemical analysis (e.g., pH, residual disinfectant levels).
- Documentation:
 - Record all activity and results in the property or appropriate maintenance or attendance log.

6. CLEANING PROCEDURE

6.1 Preparation

- Notifications: Inform relevant occupants and stakeholders about cleaning activities.
- Risk Setup:
 - Ensure that all staff have proper PPE (gloves, masks, goggles, etc.).
 - Check that all cleaning equipment, approved cleaning agents, and water testing kits are available.
- Drainage:
 - Drain the tank/cistern safely in compliance with local water disposal regulations.



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6. CLEANING PROCEDURE CONT...

6.2 Cleaning Process

- Step 1: Removal of Debris
 - Remove loose debris, sludge, or sediment using manual tools or approved equipment.
- Step 2: Scrubbing
 - Scrub the internal surfaces with an approved cleaning agent. Use brushes, running water or high-pressure systems when appropriate.
 - Follow COSHH Regulations 2002 when handling chemicals.
- Step 3: Disinfection
 - Apply an approved disinfectant in accordance with manufacturer instructions and in line with BS 8558.
 - Allow sufficient contact time for effective disinfection.
- Step 4: Rinsing
 - Thoroughly flush and rinse the tank/cistern to permanently remove cleaning chemicals and disinfectants ensuring they are disposed of safely.

6.3 Post-Cleaning

- Inspection:
 - Undertake a final visual inspection to verify cleanliness and identify any remaining contamination.
- Water Refill:
 - Refill the tank/cistern with fresh water and conduct immediate water quality tests prior to returning vessel on line.
- Securing:
 - Ensure access hatches, lids and covers are securely reinstalled to minimise any unauthorised access and to prevent contamination.
- Documentation:
 - Record the entire cleaning process, including dates, observations, cleaning chemicals use and water quality test results.



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7. DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD KEEPING

- Maintain log books for all inspections, cleaning activities, and water testing results.
- Document any corrective actions taken following inspections.
- Records must be kept for future inspection in line with property requirements and be accessible for reference or regulatory inspection.



8. TRAINING AND REVIEW

- Training:
 - Ensure all operatives are trained in safe confined space entry, manual handling and the use of cleaning chemicals as per the PPE Regulations 1992 and COSHH Regulations 2002.
- Review:
 - Regularly review and update the maintenance and cleaning procedures as part of an annual review process or following significant regulatory or infrastructure changes.
- Audit:
 - Conduct periodic audits to ensure adherence to established procedures and compliance with relevant standards.



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SUPPLEMENTARY RAMS (RISK ASSESSMENT AND METHOD STATEMENT)

1. Risk Assessment:

Activity: Inspection and Cleaning of Water Storage Tanks and Cisterns

Hazard	Risk	Control Measure
Legionella Exposure	Inhalation of contaminated aerosols during cleaning	Complete a Legionella risk assessment and control as per ACOP L8 . Use PPE (mask, gloves) and ventilation methods.
Slips, Trips & Falls	Wet and slippery surfaces; working in confined spaces	Use non-slip mats, ensure adequate lighting, and follow Confined Spaces Regulations 1997 .
Chemical Exposure	Skin/respiratory irritation from cleaning chemicals	Adhere to COSHH Regulations 2002 . Use approved cleaning agents and provide suitable PPE.
Manual Handling	Injury from lifting heavy equipment or tank parts	Follow Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 . Provide training and use mechanical aids where possible.
Electrical Hazards	Risk of contact with nearby electrical installations during cleaning	Isolate and secure nearby electrical sources; follow safe systems of work.



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2. METHOD STATEMENT

2.1 Objective

To safely inspect, clean, and disinfect water storage tanks and cisterns while minimizing risks to health and ensuring compliance with UK legislation.

2.2 Preparation & Setup

1. Pre-Work Briefing
 - Conduct a briefing with all involved personnel outlining tasks and hazards.
 - Confirm communication channels and emergency procedures.
2. Safety Equipment & Tools
 - PPE: Gloves, safety goggles, respiratory masks, protective clothing.
 - Cleaning Tools: Brushes, approved cleaning agents, disinfectants, and high-pressure water equipment.
 - Testing Equipment: Water quality testing kits for microbiological and chemical analysis.
3. Area Preparation
 - Isolate the work area and secure it to prevent unauthorized access.
 - Check for and correct any hazards (e.g., remove spills or debris).

2.3 Task Procedure

1. Drainage
 - Safely drain the tank/cistern, ensuring water is disposed of in accordance with local guidelines.
2. Cleaning
 - Manually remove loose debris and sediment.
 - Scrub all internal surfaces with an approved cleaning agent.
3. Disinfection
 - Apply a disinfectant solution, allowing it to dwell as specified by the manufacturer's guidelines (referencing BS 8558).
 - Rinse the interior thoroughly to remove any chemical residues.
4. Inspection and Testing
 - Conduct a post-cleaning inspection to ensure there is no residual contamination.
 - Refill with fresh water and perform water quality tests to verify that the tank/cistern meets required standards.



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2. METHOD STATEMENT CONT...

2.4 Post-Work Procedures

- Securing & Return to Service:
 - Reinstall covers securely to minimize risks of recontamination.
- Documentation:
 - Complete all relevant inspection, cleaning, and testing records.
 - Report any incidents or deviations from the standard procedures.
- Waste Disposal:
 - Dispose of cleaning residues and protective gear in accordance with local regulations and company policies.

2.5 Emergency Procedures

- In the Event of Exposure or Injury:
 - Provide immediate first aid. If necessary, contact emergency services.
 - Report the incident and review procedures for potential improvements.
- Chemical Spills:
 - Follow the chemical manufacturer's spill response guidelines and COSHH recommendations.

3. REVIEW AND MONITORING

Regularly review the RAMS and update it when:

- There are changes in UK legislation or industry standards.
- An incident occurs that prompts a review of current procedures.
- Equipment or working conditions change.



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CONCLUDING REMARKS

This document and supplementary RAMS have been developed to ensure that the inspection, cleaning, and maintenance of water storage tanks and cisterns are conducted safely, efficiently, and compliantly with UK legislation and recognised industry standards. By following these procedures, the integrity of the water supply system is preserved and risks to health and safety are minimised.



Contact ATCM Tanks for more information or advice, and let our experts take care of your cold-water storage needs!

**For more information or advice, please email:
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