



Water and Healthy Ageing

Hydration Best Practice Toolkit for Care Homes

Guidance on installing and using mains-fed water coolers

If you have provided or are thinking of providing water coolers for residents and staff, the following guidance is designed to help you.

Location and installation

- Think about the location of the cooler.
 - It should be near to a mains water supply (tap water).
 - If it does not have a drip tray, it may need access to drainage.
 - Its location must meet your building's current health and safety requirements.
- Don't have drinking water coolers or drinking water taps in or close to toilet areas. It is unhygienic and unpleasant for users.
- Get qualified installation engineers to install your cooler(s). Companies that are registered and trained by the European Point of use Drinking Water Association – EPDWA (www.epdwa.org) can provide qualified installation engineers.
- Check with the installer that they are using materials that are suitable for contact with drinking water and are approved by the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme – WRAS (www.wras.co.uk).
- A cooler must be connected to a fresh tap water supply, not to a water storage tank.
- Don't have pipework running through excessively warm areas or use long lengths of very small pipes.
- Make sure the cooler is securely fixed to an appropriate structure.
- For reasons of health and hygiene, it is important that machines are regularly sanitised and maintained.
- Treat and service water coolers as you would any other piece of important electrical equipment.

Filters and maintenance – see over



Filters

- Machines fed by tap water (from the mains) do not need to have filters fitted. Fresh, wholesome tap water is of a high quality and is safe to drink.
- Filters are sometimes fitted in water coolers to further improve the taste of the tap water. However, filters must never be used as a way of removing debris from your care home internal pipework, or to make water that has become poor or unsafe in the building taste good again. If there are doubts about your water quality, do not drink it and do not serve it. Instead, ask for professional assistance from your facilities maintenance team or your local water company.
- If you choose to keep or specify filters, they should be certified for their intended purpose.
- Filters should be changed at least every six months.

Maintenance

- Ask the company who supplied the cooler to provide you with guidelines on basic maintenance that you can do, and how often this should be done.
- Keep a formal record of how often you thoroughly clean the cooler.
- Filters should be changed by qualified engineers at least every six months.
- If the machine has a drip tray, empty this daily.
- Keep drip trays clean and sanitised.
- Ensure that all the external surfaces of the cooler are kept clean.
- Keep panels and the taps clean using food standard antibacterial cleaner.
- Do not disconnect your cooler without advising the cooler company.
- Coolers not used for periods of around a fortnight should be thoroughly cleaned before use.
- Coolers not used for more than a few days should be flushed through (remove about 3 litres of water, but don't waste it – use it on gardens or in plants).