Non-drinking water in Pimpama Coomera region

Non-drinking water uses

Non-drinking water can be used for:

- irrigation of lawns, gardens, fruit trees and vegetable crops (fruit and vegetables should be rinsed in drinking water before consumption)
- flushing toilets
- washing cars, houses and other similar outdoor uses
- filling ornamental ponds, water features and fountains
- approved commercial, construction and industry uses
- fire fighting (except fire sprinkler systems).

Non-drinking water cannot be used for:

- drinking
- cooking or kitchen purposes
- personal washing such as baths, showers, bidets and hand basins
- domestic evaporative coolers
- washing clothes
- swimming pools and spas
- recreation, such as playing under sprinklers and water toys
- a water source for pets and livestock
- filling rainwater tanks or other storages.

The essential seven step check for dual reticulated properties:

1. Turn off drinking water supply at the property boundary and rainwater tank pump and/or valve.
   - Turn on all internal taps. Taps should run dry as the drinking water supply has been turned off.
   - Flush all toilets. Toilets should refill if they are connected to the non-drinking water supply.

2. Turn on external taps.
   - Any external drinking water taps should run dry as the drinking water supply is still turned off.
   - Taps continuing to run are connected to non-drinking water supply and should be coloured purple and marked with appropriate signs.

3. Turn off non-drinking water supply and turn on drinking water supply and rainwater tank pump and/or valve.
   - Run non-drinking water supply dry via external taps or toilet flushing.
   - Turn on internal water using appliances. Appliances that do not fill are connected to incorrect supply.
   - Turn on non-drinking water supply.

When turning the non-drinking water or drinking water supplies back on, slowly turn on the tap that is located furthest from the meter. This will purge all air from the pipeline while it is being recharged.

For more information on this process or to report an incorrect connection, service difficulties or emergencies, contact the City on 07 5667 5801 or 1300 000 928.

Related information

- Recycled water

Jump to key information

Key Information

Brochures, fact sheets & reports

- Class A+ recycled water household dual reticulation audits
- Frequently asked questions for customers
- Living with multiple water sources
- New developments in the Pimpama Coomera area
- Pimpama Coomera Recycled Water Master Plan Public Reports
- Pimpama Coomera Recycled Water Scheme Annual Report
Frequently asked questions

What is non-drinking water?

Non-drinking water can be drawn from various sources and treated according to several qualities or classes depending on its intended use.

What is dual reticulation?

Dual reticulation refers to zones and properties that are plumbed with two separate pipe networks supplying their water. For some customers, these means they are connected to both a drinking water network and a non-drinking water network. For easy identification, the entire non-drinking water network is coloured purple including water mains, meters, pipes, taps and hoses.

What do residents in Pimpama-Coomera use non-drinking water for?

Non-drinking water is supplied to some dual reticulated Pimpama-Coomera homes and businesses via a purple hose and tap for flushing toilets, filling ornamental ponds, car washing, external cleaning, fire-fighting purposes, washing gardens, lawns and fruit and vegetable crops. Fruit and vegetables should be rinsed in drinking water before consumption.

Non-drinking water is not appropriate for personal use such as drinking, bathing, cooking or general cleaning inside the home; nor should it be used in pools, spas or children's water toys. If you are uncertain whether to use non-drinking water or drinking water for any purpose, use the drinking water supply.

Non-drinking water can be used for:

- toilet flushing
- garden and lawn
- filling ornamental ponds
- car washing
- fire fighting (except for sprinkler systems)
- construction and building purposes
- dust suppression
- irrigation of fruit and vegetables (should be rinsed in drinking water before consumption)
- external household cleaning.

Non-drinking water should not be used for:

- drinking
- cooking or kitchen purposes
- personal washing such as baths, showers, bidets and hand basins
- domestic evaporative coolers
- clothes washing
- swimming pools and spas
- recreation, such as water toys and playing under sprinklers
- a water source for pets and livestock
- filling rainwater tanks or other storages.

What is changing?

From early 2017, customers who have been receiving Class A+ recycled water through their dual reticulation system will have the source of their water switched. This will be known as a non-drinking water supply.

What does this mean for customers in the Pimpama Coomera region?

There will be no immediate impact on home owners, residents (owner occupier and tenants) and businesses in the Pimpama Coomera supply area. Customers who currently have dual reticulation infrastructure in place (second water meter and purple pipes) in a ‘live’ area, and have been receiving Class A+ recycled water, will continue to receive a non-drinking water supply for approved non-drinking purposes.

Following the switch, what do I use the purple hose and taps for?

The water supplied via your purple pipes can still only be used for approved non-drinking purposes. This includes:
Where does the supply of non-drinking water come from?

Customers will receive their non-drinking water supply from various locations around the Pimpama Coomera area depending on where they live.

Is the replacement supply of non-drinking water the same quality as before?

The non-drinking water supply will be of an equivalent quality standard and should be used by customers in exactly the same way e.g. for toilet flushing or outdoor use (as per the list of approved purposes).

Will I be charged more for non-drinking water?

There will be no impact to the current prices. Water measured through the non-drinking water meter will be charged at the reduced rate. All customers will be notified if there are any changes to this in future.

If I want to build on my vacant land in the Pimpama Coomera area, do I still need to put in dual reticulation infrastructure?

Customers who have not yet developed their land will still be required to install a dual pipeline if they are located in a dual supply system area. This is to ensure that water pressure to the area remains consistent, as pipes leading to households with dual reticulation are also built using two pressurized systems to split the water supply.

Will I be reimbursed by the City of Gold Coast (City) for having to put in dual reticulation infrastructure?

Reimbursement for installation of dual infrastructure is not being considered. However, you will still pay a reduced rate for the non-drinking water supply.

Why do I have dual reticulation but have always been charged at the drinking water price?

You are in an area that has never gone 'live' with non-drinking water. Although you have dual reticulation infrastructure, you have been receiving drinking water via both your meters. Therefore, you are charged for the drinking water which is used through both meters at the applicable drinking water price. The supply switch does not impact your situation and you are to continue using the water supply as you always have.

Will the City continue to monitor and test the non-drinking water supply?

The City already has a number of sample taps on the non-drinking water pipelines which are regularly tested and are representative of the water supply to households. The City will monitor the water quality from these points following the switch to ensure that it complies with the water quality criteria set out in the legislation. Additional testing may be carried out as deemed necessary, or if requested.

If I want to build on my vacant land in the Pimpama Coomera area, do I still need to put in dual reticulation infrastructure?

Customers who have not yet developed their land may still be required to install dual services if they are located in a dual supply system area. This is to ensure that water pressure to the area is maintained through the dual reticulation network.

How do I know if I receive a non-drinking water supply?

In some small areas in the Pimpama-Coomera region, houses have been fitted with dual reticulation pipes however they never went live with non-drinking water and are only receiving drinking water via both pipes. These areas are shaded in pink on the Pimpama Coomera WaterSupply Map November Season File.

Do other communities use non-drinking water?

Non-drinking water is used in numerous dual reticulated communities throughout Australia, including Aurora in Melbourne, Keans Hill in Sydney and Kawana Lakes in Adelaide.

The Gold Coast has safely used non-drinking water for more than 40 years to irrigate golf courses, football ovals and community parks. It has been used by cove farmers and the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary on the Gold Coast for more than ten years.

Can non-drinking water get mixed up with drinking water in the pipeline?

Two completely separate pipelines are established for non-drinking water and drinking water with the non-drinking water pipeline clearly labelled. The systems are regularly monitored to ensure safety. Plumbers, together with the construction and building industries in the Gold Coast district, are educated on the need to keep these two systems separate on the street, as at the meter and in the home. All plumbing works in the Pimpama-Coomera region must be undertaken by a licensed plumber.

The non-drinking water supplied via your purple pipe can only be used for toilet flushing and outdoor use.
Is there a test to ensure the non-drinking water pipes and the drinking water pipes are not cross connected on my property?

Yes. Please contact City of Gold Coast’s Plumbing and Drainage section to check that your property has had a final plumbing inspection on 07 5667 5977.

You may however like to conduct your own test. The following information is advisory – if you are unsure about any plumbing, please call a licensed plumber.

Householders may take the following steps to conduct their own cross-connection check for dual reticulated properties:

Turn off drinking water supply at the property boundary and rainwater tank pump and/or valve.

Turn on all internal taps. Taps should run dry as the drinking water supply has been turned off.

Flush all toilets. Toilets should refill if they are connected to the non-drinking water supply.

Turn on external taps. Any external drinking water taps should run dry as the drinking water supply is still turned off.

Taps continuing to run are connected to the non-drinking water supply and should be coloured purple and marked with appropriate signs.

Turn off non-drinking water supply and turn on drinking water supply and rainwater tank pump and/or valve.

Run non-drinking water supply dry via external taps or toilet flushing.

Turn on internal appliances. Appliances that do not fill are connected to internal supply.

Turn off non-drinking water supply.

Slowly turn on tap connected to the non-drinking water supply that is located furthest from meter. This will purge all air from the pipelines while it is being recharged.

*Please note this test may also be undertaken by plumbers and the City.

What if non-drinking water is consumed? Is it safe?

If you accidentally consume non-drinking water, it is unlikely you would experience any illness. However, you should consult a doctor if any symptoms of illness develop.

The Runcorn-Coomera area has a number of precautions to avoid the possibility of accidental ingestion of non-drinking water, including:

- Colour coding of all pipes and taps to prevent confusion
- Removable handles on outdoor non-drinking water taps to prevent access if needed
- Warning signs above all outdoor non-drinking water taps

How can I tell if the water I see irrigating parks and other outdoor spaces is drinking water or non-drinking water?

Landscape areas using non-drinking water for irrigation are clearly marked with signage stating the use of non-drinking water.

When will I be billed for drinking water and non-drinking water?

You will be billed for non-drinking water at the same time as you are billed for drinking water on your quarterly water and sewerage rates notice.

How much is non-drinking water?

The cost of non-drinking water is less than drinking water. This allows residents and businesses to save on their water bills.

What is the water pressure of non-drinking water? Is it as good as the normal drinking water supply?

The water pressure in your non-drinking water pipes is comparable to drinking water pipes and is adequate for all approved uses.

Where do I buy non-drinking water taps, hoses etc.?

Non-drinking water supplies are coloured purple to avoid confusion with drinking water and rainwater supplies can be purchased from selected hardware and plumbing supply stores.

Where can I buy left hand threaded purple non-drinking water taps?

For properties with purple non-drinking water taps with a left hand thread, standard hose fittings may not connect to your non-drinking water taps. The City has tap adaptor fittings available to address this issue. Two fittings per household are available. To order these fittings please call 1300 080 528.

Where can I find out more information?

Call our Customer Contact Centre on 1300 080 528. You can also email your query to hydronwater@goldcoast.qld.gov.au.