

Frequently Asked Questions

WATER QUALITY AND WATER LEAKS

WATER QUALITY

What is safe drinking water?

Safe drinking water is free of harmful concentrations of chemicals or pathogenic microorganisms.

The *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines* are used by Isaac Regional Council to provide safe, good quality drinking water.

Council's Drinking Water Quality Management Plan (DWQMP) is approved by Department of Natural Resources, Mine and Energy.

How do I know my water is safe to drink?

As detailed in the DWQMP, Council strictly follows various testing and monitoring regimes to ensure drinking water is always safe. Contaminated water may not look, taste, or smell different to safe drinking water.

This is why monitoring and testing of water is so important.

The *Australian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines* (ADWQG) are followed stringently by Isaac Regional Council with implemented monitoring programs to ensure a safe drinking water supply and protect public health.

Each year, we conduct over 10,000 tests at our water treatment plant for more than 100 parameters.

We perform daily operational testing and continuous online monitoring at our water treatment plants and many of our water storage tanks and dams.

In addition to this, compliance sampling, verification monitoring and analysis is also conducted by a National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia) certified Laboratory.

All of this data is closely monitored by our Drinking Water Quality team.



Why can I taste/smell chlorine in my drinking water?

Chlorine is added to drinking water to kill microorganisms (i.e. E.coli) that may be present.

It is important that chlorine residual is maintained in the drinking water after leaving the plant to prevent microorganisms from regrowing in the water pipelines.

Some people may detect this chlorine residual through smell or taste.

The chlorine concentration is generally very low (less than 1 part per million) and can be reduced further by letting the water sit in the fridge in an open jug for a short period prior to consumption.

What is turbidity?

Turbidity is caused by the presence of fine suspended matter such as clay and silt and can result in the water having a muddy or milky appearance.

Turbidity reduction most commonly occurs via coagulation, clarification and filtration water treatment processes.

Isaac Regional Council monitors this with online systems and daily testing to ensure levels in drinking water meet the *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines*.

Water Quality and Water Leaks



What should I do if my water is dirty?

Water can become discoloured for a number of reasons, including the disturbance of sediments within water mains. Our distribution systems are flushed routinely as part of our preventative maintenance program. Discoloured water can also arise due to the condition of private service pipes or internal plumbing, particularly in older properties.

If your water is dirty, we suggest that you run at least two taps (such as your garden taps) for a few minutes until the water clears – dirty water can be reused on the garden. If the water does not clear up within a reasonable amount of time, then we suggest that you call Council on **1300 ISAACS (1300 47 22 27)** for assistance.

What should I do if my water is milky coloured or has air in it?

A milky or white appearance may indicate the presence of air in your water – similar to the air created by a tap with a diffuser fitted. This air is harmless and will usually settle out if left to stand in a jug or container. We suggest that you run at least two taps (such as your garden taps) for a few minutes until the water runs clear – water can be reused on the garden. If the water does not clear up within a reasonable amount of time, then we suggest that you call Council on **1300 ISAACS (1300 47 22 27)** for assistance.

Do algae blooms affect my drinking water?

Some algae can produce taste, odour and toxic compounds. However, Council has treatment processes in place which prevents these from impacting on the quality of drinking water. We also conduct algae monitoring throughout our drinking water catchments during the warmer months of the year when algae blooms are more common.

What causes blue staining of baths and basins?

Blue or bluish-green staining is often an indicator of elevated copper levels and is often caused by age and corrosion in customers' pipes. Council monitors for copper levels and has consistently low copper results in all systems. Advice on the condition of your property's pipes should be sought from your plumber.

Is the water in my rain water tank safe to drink?

The quality of water in rain water tanks is usually high in bacteria. For details on rain water tanks and drinking water is available at www.health.gov.au

WATER LEAKS

Checking for leaks in taps, toilets and pipes regularly (and repairing them quickly) is a simple task, which could save you a lot of money in the long run.

Aside from leading to high water bills, leaks can cause structural damage to your property and even attract termites. Below are some tips on detecting, preventing and repairing leaks at your property.

Checking for leaks at home

Council is responsible for water leaks from the supply system, up to and including the water meter. Water leaks that occur from water pipes and fittings on your side of the water meter are the responsibility of the property owner. If you find a leak, turn your water off at the meter immediately and call a licensed plumber.

If you suspect a leak:

- Turn off all taps and water-using appliances in and around your home.
- Check your water meter. If the dials on your meter are moving there could be a leak. If there is no movement on the dials there could still be a slow leak.
- To check if there is a leak do not use any water for two hours or overnight, then take another reading.
- To fix the leak, check all fixtures and fittings and/or call a licensed plumber.

Plumbing work must be carried out by a licensed plumber or a licensed tradesperson working under a licensed plumber.

How can I prevent leaks?

Below are some simple ways to prevent leaks, and save money:

- Avoid planting large trees over pipes and mains that run through your property as their root growth may damage the pipes.
- Root growth can also cause cracks and leaks in your pool, so chat to your local nursery about suitable plants.
- Inspect your pool regularly for cracks and signs of leaks.
- Ensure automatic watering systems (e.g. irrigation) are regularly maintained and checked for leaks.
- Turn taps off gently to help lengthen the life of washers.
- If you have a water hammer problem install water hammer arresters. These help extend the life of affected pipes by reducing shock.
- Ensure all building and renovation work is undertaken by a licensed professional.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
ISAAC.QLD.GOV.AU | **1300 ISAACS** (1300 47 22 27)

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