
STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2015 No. 365

**The Natural Mineral Water, Spring Water and Bottled
Drinking Water Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

PART 2

Natural mineral water

Recognition as natural mineral water

4.—(1) Natural mineral water may only be sold as natural mineral water if it is recognised in accordance with paragraph (2).

(2) Water is recognised as natural mineral water where—

- (a) in the case of water extracted from the ground in Northern Ireland, the district council grants recognition in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 1;
- (b) in the case of water extracted from the ground in another part of the United Kingdom, the responsible authority of that part of the United Kingdom recognises it pursuant to Directive 2009/54;
- (c) in the case of water extracted from the ground in an EEA State other than the United Kingdom, a responsible authority of that EEA State recognises it pursuant to Directive 2009/54;
- (d) in the case of water extracted from the ground in a country other than an EEA State—
 - (i) the Agency grants recognition in accordance with Part 2 of Schedule 1;
 - (ii) it has an equivalent recognition, given by a responsible authority of another part of the United Kingdom, or an EEA State other than the United Kingdom.

(3) The publication in the Official Journal of the European Union of the name of any water as a natural mineral water recognised in the European Union for the purposes of Directive 2009/54 is conclusive evidence that that water is recognised for the purposes of that Directive, except where recognition is granted in accordance with Schedule 1.

Declining to grant or withdrawing recognition

5.—(1) Where, in relation to any water that has been recognised under regulation 4(2)(a) or 4(2)(d)(i) it is found that—

- (a) by analysis in accordance with Part 3 of Schedule 1, the requirements of paragraph 3 of that Part are not met;
- (b) the requirements of Schedule 4 are not met; or
- (c) the content of the water is not in accordance with Part 1, paragraph 1(c) or Part 2, paragraph 1(c) of Schedule 1.

the district council or, as the case may be, the Agency may withdraw that recognition until such time as the requirements concerned are met.

(2) Where the district council or the Agency declines to grant or withdraws recognition of a water, the person who exploits or wishes to exploit the spring from which that water emerges or, if different, the person who owns the land on which that spring is situated may within 6 months of being notified of the decision seek a review of the decision by a person appointed for the purpose by the Agency.

(3) The appointed person must review the decision and consider any representations made by the district council or the Agency and within 3 months report in writing with a recommended course of action to the Agency.

(4) The Agency must either—

- (a) confirm the decision together with the reasons; or
- (b) direct the district council to grant or restore, or itself restore recognition of the water in question.

(5) Where a district council is directed by the Agency under paragraph (4)(b) to grant or restore recognition, it must immediately comply with that direction.

Application to withdraw recognition

6. A person who exploits a spring from which water is extracted which is recognised as natural mineral water in accordance with regulation 4(2)(a) or 4(2)(d)(i), may apply to the district council or the Agency, as appropriate, to have that recognition withdrawn.

Notification of changes

7. A district council must immediately notify the Agency if—

- (a) it grants, restores or withdraws recognition of a natural mineral water; or
- (b) it is notified of any change to the trade description of a natural mineral water or to the name of a spring from which natural mineral water has been extracted.

Exploitation of natural mineral water springs

8.—(1) A person must not exploit a spring for the purpose of marketing the water from it as natural mineral water unless—

- (a) the water extracted from that spring is natural mineral water;
- (b) the Northern Ireland Environment Agency has authorised water to be abstracted from that spring; and
- (c) the requirements of Schedule 4 are met.

(2) Where it is found during exploitation that natural mineral water is polluted and that the bottling of the water would contravene paragraphs 6, 7 or 8 of Schedule 4, a person must not exploit the spring from which the water is extracted until the cause of the pollution is eradicated and the bottling of the water would comply with those paragraphs.

Treatments and additions for natural mineral water

9.—(1) A person must not subject natural mineral water in its state at source to—

- (a) any treatment other than—
 - (i) the separation of its unstable elements, such as iron and sulphur compounds, by filtration or decanting, whether or not preceded by oxygenation, in so far as the treatment does not alter the composition of the water as regards the essential constituents which give it its properties;

- (ii) the total or partial elimination of free carbon dioxide by exclusively physical methods;
 - (iii) fluoride removal treatment which is authorised in accordance with Schedule 2; or
 - (iv) an ozone-enriched air oxidation technique which is authorised in accordance with Schedule 3;
- (b) any addition other than the introduction or the re-introduction of carbon dioxide to produce effervescent natural mineral water; or
- (c) any disinfection treatment by whatever means, or, subject to paragraph (1)(b), the addition of bacteriostatic elements or any other treatment likely to change the viable colony count of the natural mineral water.
- (2) Paragraph (1) does not prevent the use of natural mineral water in the manufacture of soft drinks.

Bottling of natural mineral water

- 10.**—(1) A person must not bottle any natural mineral water—
- (a) unless the requirements of Schedule 4 are met;
 - (b) in a container other than a container which is fitted with closures designed to avoid any possibility of adulteration or contamination; and
 - (c) which, at the time of bottling, contains any substance listed in Part 1 of Schedule 5 at a level which exceeds the maximum limit specified in relation to that substance in that Schedule.
- (2) The methods used for detection of the substances listed in Part 1 of Schedule 5 must conform to the performance characteristics for analysis specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5.

Labelling of natural mineral water

- 11.**—(1) A person must not bottle natural mineral water and label it with—
- (a) a trade description which includes the name of the locality, hamlet or other place, unless that trade description refers to a natural mineral water spring, the spring of which, is exploited at the place indicated by that description and is not misleading as regards the place of exploitation of the spring;
 - (b) a trade description which is different from the name of the spring or the place of its exploitation, unless the name of the spring or place of exploitation is also labelled on the bottle, using letters at least one and a half times the height and width of the largest of the letters used for that trade description;
 - (c) any indication, designation, trade mark, brand name, picture or other sign, whether figurative or not, the use of which suggests a characteristic which the water does not possess, in particular as regards its origin, the date of authorisation to exploit the spring, the results of analyses or any similar references to guarantees of authenticity;
 - (d) any indication other than those specified in subparagraphs (f) and (g), attributing to the natural mineral water properties relating to the prevention, treatment or cure of a human illness;
 - (e) any indication listed in the first column of the Table in Schedule 6, except where the natural mineral water meets the criterion so listed and corresponds to the indication;
 - (f) the indication “may be diuretic” or “may be laxative”, unless the natural mineral water has been assessed as possessing the property attributed by the indication in accordance with physico-chemical analysis and pharmacological, physiological or clinical examination as appropriate; or

- (g) the indication “stimulates digestion” or “may facilitate the hepato-biliary functions”, unless the natural mineral water has been assessed as possessing the property attributed by the indication in accordance with the physico-chemical analysis and pharmacological, physiological and clinical examination.
- (2) A person must not bottle natural mineral water and label it with a sales description other than—
- (a) “natural mineral water”; or
 - (b) in the case of an effervescent natural mineral water, one of the following, as appropriate—
 - (i) “naturally carbonated natural mineral water” to describe water whose content of carbon dioxide from the spring after decanting, if any, and bottling is the same as at source, taking into account, where appropriate, the reintroduction of a quantity of carbon dioxide from the same water table or deposit equivalent to that released in the course of those operations and subject to the usual technical tolerances;
 - (ii) “natural mineral water fortified with gas from the spring” to describe water whose content of carbon dioxide from the same water table or the same deposit after decanting, if any, and bottling is greater than that established at source; or
 - (iii) “carbonated natural mineral water” to describe water to which has been added carbon dioxide of an origin other than the water table or deposit from which the water comes.
- (3) A person must not bottle natural mineral water unless the bottle is labelled with—
- (a) a statement of analytical composition indicating the characteristic constituents of the water;
 - (b) the name of the place where the spring is exploited and the name of the spring;
 - (c) where the water has undergone the treatment of total or partial elimination of free carbon dioxide by exclusively physical methods, the indication “fully de-carbonated” or “partially de-carbonated”, as appropriate;
 - (d) where the water has undergone an ozone-enriched air treatment, the words “water subjected to an authorised ozone-enriched air oxidation technique”, which must appear in proximity to the analytical composition of characteristic constituents; and
 - (e) where its fluoride concentration exceeds 1.5 mg/l—
 - (i) the words “contains more than 1.5 mg/l of fluoride; not suitable for regular consumption by infants and children under 7 years of age”, which must appear in immediate proximity to the trade name and in clearly visible characters; and
 - (ii) the actual fluoride content in relation to the physico-chemical composition, which must be included within the statement referred to in paragraph (3)(a).

Advertising of natural mineral water

- 12.—(1) Where in accordance with regulation 11(1)(b) a bottle containing a natural mineral water is required to be labelled with the name of the spring or the place of its exploitation—
- (a) the same requirement also applies to any written advertisement for that natural mineral water; and
 - (b) in any other advertisement, at least equivalent prominence must be given to the place of exploitation or the name of the spring as is given to the trade description.
- (2) A person must not advertise natural mineral water in contravention of paragraph (1).
- (3) A person must not advertise natural mineral water under any indication, designation, trade mark, brand name, picture or other sign, whether figurative or not, the use of which suggests a characteristic which the water does not possess, in particular as regards its origin, the date

of authorisation to exploit it, the results of analyses or any similar references to guarantees of authenticity.

Sale of natural mineral water

13.—(1) A person must not sell water which is bottled and labelled “natural mineral water” unless that water is natural mineral water recognised in accordance with regulation 4(2).

(2) A person must not sell bottled natural mineral water if it—

- (a) has been extracted from a spring which is exploited in contravention of regulation 8;
- (b) has been subjected to any treatment or addition in contravention of regulation 9;
- (c) is bottled in contravention of regulation 10;
- (d) is labelled in contravention of regulation 11; or
- (e) is advertised in contravention of regulation 12.

(3) A person must not sell bottled natural mineral water—

- (a) which contains—
 - (i) parasites or pathogenic micro-organisms;
 - (ii) *Escherichia coli* or other coliforms and faecal streptococci in any 250ml sample examined;
 - (iii) sporulated sulphite-reducing anaerobes in any 50ml sample examined; or
 - (iv) *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in any 250 ml sample examined;
- (b) where the total colony count of the water at the source from which that water was taken does not comply with paragraph 7 of Schedule 4;
- (c) where the revivable total colony count of that water is in excess of that which would result from the normal increase in the bacterial count which it had at source; or
- (d) where that water contains any organoleptic defect.

(4) A person must not sell natural mineral water from the same spring under more than one trade description.