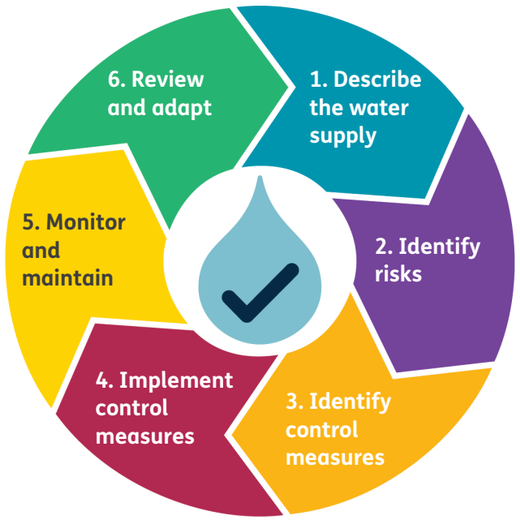
Water safety plans

Developing a water safety plan consists of six steps. These steps are designed to be repeated, so the whole process can be viewed as a cycle.

It is important to ensure that as many people in the community as possible are involved in working through these steps: men, women, young people and children.

Elderly people and people with disabilities might access water in different ways to other community members, so make sure that they are included in the conversations.



1 Describe the water supply

Using participatory activities such as a transect walk and mapping, investigate and describe your water supply route from source to use. As you describe it, you will become more familiar with the system and different things that could affect water quantity and quality.

You can use photos, videos, drawings or words to describe the different parts of your water system.

2 Identify risks

Identify what could go wrong at each stage of your water supply route. Think about both current and potential contamination risks. For example, the risks associated with open defecation near an unprotected spring.

Work together to answer these questions:

- What could go wrong with our water supply system, increasing the risk of contamination?
- How and why might it go wrong?
- At what times and where might it go wrong?
- What would be the consequences of it going wrong?
- What is already being done to prevent it from going wrong?

3 Identify control measures

Think about what needs to be done to reduce the risk of contamination at any point in your water supply system. For example, you may need to put a livestock fence around a tap stand or make sure that water is collected in clean containers.

Once you have a list of control measures, discuss which solutions will be the most effective and easiest to carry out. Prioritise the ones that will have the greatest impact. Decide who will do the work, and when.

4 Implement control measures

Put in place the new control measures and monitor and maintain existing water-protection practices.

If you have limited resources and cannot implement all the control measures at once, draw up a step-by-step plan for how you will make the changes as resources become available.

5 Monitor and maintain

Establish systems to monitor and maintain a safe water supply including regular water-quality testing.

Establish procedures for what to do if there is a contamination incident or emergency, eg flooding. Consider: who should be notified; who may need help to respond, such as older people and people with disabilities; how messages will be passed on quickly (eg radio broadcasts and text messages); which alternative safe water supplies can be used.

6 Review and adapt

Document your water safety plan so everyone can confidently follow the correct procedures.

To ensure that the water safety plan is effective and up to date, regularly review what is working well and what needs to be changed.

Transect walk

Involving as many members of your community as possible, walk a route through your local area, visiting places connected with your water supply and water quality. For example: sources; transport routes; water points (wells/handpumps/tap stands); storage areas; markets; livestock-watering sites; drainage courses; waste-dumping sites; open defecation areas. It can be helpful to take photographs or videos during the walk.

With a facilitator, describe your water supply route and discuss places where water could become contaminated.

As a group, you may wish to draw a map of your water supply route (on paper, or on the ground) using symbols or objects to illustrate the different parts of the route and contamination risks.

For more information and access to training, visit **learn.tearfund.org** *and search for 'Water safety plan'*