

## Industry Specifications for Birthing Baths

### Birth Bath

Minimum dimensions: maximum internal dimensions not less than 1300mm long by 800mm wide by 600mm deep with a minimum capacity of 550L. Ordinarily, a birth pool will have a capacity of circa 800L and internal dimensions of 1500mm by 1000mm. There is no standard shape, though elliptical, oval and oblong shapes are currently the most common.

### Plumbing

Birth baths should have a metal waste with a screw-tail rather than plastic pipe incorporated into the GRP / acrylic of the bath tub. The adherence between the two different plastics is rarely enduring.

Waste may leave the bath either downwards or at sideways angle.

A trap should be incorporated as close to waste as possible so as to comply with water and hygiene regulations. It is not sufficient to require that the valve be left closed or the plug left in. A 'straight-through' trap (such as the Hepworth VO) should be used to ensure there is no standing water in a trap.

Sluice valves should be avoided in preference to ball valves or plug wastes *when possible*. Quarter-turn ball valves should be compliant to BS 3505 & 4346, & EN1452 parts 1-3.

Plug and chain wastes are acceptable, where there is a rigorous cleaning regime, as they are easy to clean and replace. The bath should not have any additional fittings that provide crevices where bacteria may collect. Taps, chain-stays and over flows should not be fitted directly to the bath. Where a plug and chain is used, the chain should loop over taps and be removable so that it can be soaked as part of a cleaning regime.

**A note about taps.** It is not the purpose of this memorandum to specify taps. The list of suppliers below is not exhaustive and is only a start point. Suppliers such as Twyford and Armitage Shanks supply taps that are in accordance with recent Technical Memoranda, Water Regulations, and so on. Rada also make sensor taps which are suitable. Taps will need thermostatic mixer valves compliant to TM3 / THM64.

Quarter turn ball valves (and sluice valves if used) should be fixed firmly to the floor by clamps at either end of the valve or adjoining pipework. This is to prevent the repeated use of the valve dislodging pipework.

All waste pipework should be at least 40mm in diameter. Solvent-weld joints are to be preferred. All waste pipework to be fitted in accordance with BS BS5572 for avoidance of standing water. The use of flexible piping should be avoided (except where used to provide a joint) as they provide a rough surface which slows emptying and which is less easily cleaned. It is also prone to sagging and may cause the ponding of water.

A hatchway is needed to allow the operation of the valve and access for maintenance.

Single-surface baths or 'all-in-one' baths are to be preferred over baths with removable panels as these provide recesses or rough surfaces which are difficult to clean. From an infection control viewpoint, therefore, one-piece baths with integral sides are to be preferred as they provide a single surface that is easily cleaned.

For similar reasons, metal handles incorporated into the bath may be best avoided as an obstacle to cleaning. Instead, handles should be moulded into the bath side, or be made of stainless steel and affixed to adjacent IPS panels or walls.

Baths with antibacterial gel coats confer a benefit to the hospital and birthing mother in terms of additional safety and cleanliness.

### **Steps**

Baths should be supplied with steps.

Steps should either:

Comprise an internal step / seat with and external step at a matching height and position.

Or

The bath should be provided with an external low step. This option may be more suitable where the birth bath is more compact.

Any step should have the option of being fixed to the bath to prevent the slipping of the step unit when in use.

### **Lights.**

Lights are an *optional* extra and should use waterproof LED lights, with sealed cabling.

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