

THE FRENCH REGULATION FOR MEDICAL ENVIRONMENTS: A REVOLUTION IN WATER CONTROLS



The introduction of the French regulation 077 MM, relating specifically to mixers and taps for medical environments, means significant changes in the design of mechanical, thermostatic and electronic mixers. DELABIE is among the few manufacturers who offer products that already comply.



The importance of sanitary regulations in healthcare establishments is well-known. **Bacterial contamination of water systems carries an extremely high risk** to the health of patients with weakened immune systems, principally linked to the proliferation of *Legionella* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

In France, a new regulation known as NF MM, was recently introduced, establishing a whole new set of specific requirements in the healthcare sector. Some of these requirements are not surprising and are already commonplace in the UK, however, the decision to ban controls with a mixing chamber* under pressure upstream of the closing mechanism is a radical change, and **significantly reduces the number of compliant mixers.**

**where the mixing of hot and cold water takes place in order to obtain mixed water*

The end of non-return valves

Cross flow between hot and cold water inevitably creates conditions favourable to bacterial development in water controls. In order to avoid this risk, the French regulation NF MM requires that **the mixer's closing mechanism is located upstream of the mixing chamber.** There is no longer any need for non-return valves on the water inlets. Traditionally used to prevent hot water flowing back into the cold water supply (or vice versa depending on which has the higher pressure), these non-return valves are now considered the principal cause of bacterial proliferation.

Non-return valves are not reliable because sooner or later impurities prevent them from being watertight meaning they cannot function correctly.

With the obligation to have mixers' closing mechanisms located upstream of mixing chambers eliminating the need for non-return valves, **the French regulation NF MM is revolutionising the market.** This regulation rules out the majority of electronic and thermostatic mixers produced for medical settings.

EPDM flexibles and aerators definitively banned

In terms of supplies to mixers, the objective of the regulation is to delay, if not prevent, the formation of biofilm (a group of microorganisms that form a thin viscous layer).

Single hole deck-mounted controls **must therefore be fitted with either copper tails, or PEX or silicone flexible hoses,** for the hot and cold water supplies.

Generally used in domestic installations, **EPDM flexibles are not suitable** for healthcare establishments. Both preventative and curative treatments cause this material to rapidly deteriorate. After repeated thermal or chemical shocks, the EPDM hose releases debris which also favours bacterial development.

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Aerators are also banned, because the mix of water and air generated at the tap or mixer outlet increases the risk of creating aerosols. This is before taking into account the impurities captured in their thin grids, also favouring bacterial persistence. Whilst this has long been the case in UK hospitals, in France **aerators can now no longer be fitted on tap or mixer outlets.**

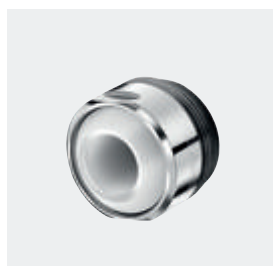
Taps and mixers suitable for terminal filters

It is not enough to limit bacterial proliferation in the system, but the system must also be protected from retro-contamination by bacteria present on spouts. Terminal filters are commonly fitted on taps or mixers in order to provide water free from microorganisms.

To facilitate the fitting of these filters without compromising user comfort, **minimum dimensions have been specified:** 90mm drop height (distance between the tap or mixer base and the spout) and 100mm spout length for deck-mounted controls, with at least 100mm drop height and 175mm spout length for wall-mounted versions.

Additionally, a long lever of at least 110mm is required, making it easier to grip or operate without the use of hands (generally elbows).

Images available on our website delabie.com, in the PRESS section

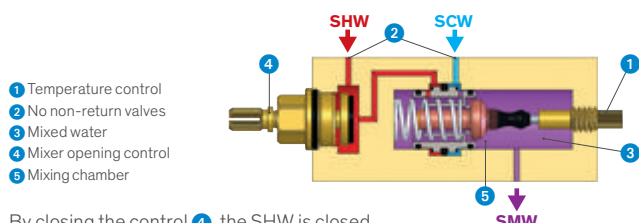


Ref. DELABIE : 923024



Ref. DELABIE : H9769

THERMOSTATIC TECHNOLOGY DELABIE H9769
In line with new French regulation



By closing the control (4), the SHW is closed. The thermostatic cell therefore closes the SCW. There is no risk of cross flow between SHW and SCW.

Ref. DELABIE: NFMM

DELABIE, manufacturer's expertise

DELABIE, a 100% family-owned French company, founded in 1928, is the European market leader in water controls and sanitary equipment for public and commercial places. The company offers five product ranges specifically for this market: Commercial water controls, Hospital water controls, Accessibility and Hygienic accessories, Stainless steel sanitary ware and Specialist water controls.

Over 3,000 DELABIE manufactured items, including international references, are exported from its factory in France to more than 90 countries.

The company has 8 subsidiaries worldwide: Germany, Benelux, United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, Poland, United Arab Emirates (Dubai) and China (Hong-Kong).

DELABIE at the forefront

For the last 25 years, DELABIE has been fighting for the majority of the measures contained in this French regulation to be adopted. It is, therefore, not surprising that a large part of DELABIE's healthcare range is already compliant.

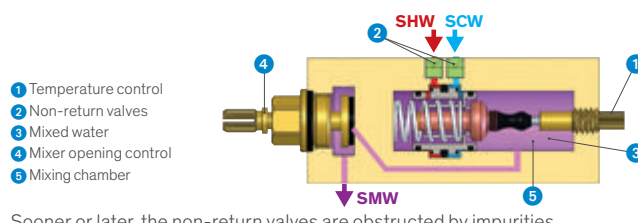
In France all DELABIE's mixers and taps are fitted with PEX flexible supply hoses.

Copper tails, a standard option in the UK for a long time, are now also available as an option in France.

Mixers and taps from the healthcare range have flow straighteners without grids that do not aspirate air. Made from Hostaform, a material that limits the build-up of scale, their maintenance is also limited. Some of DELABIE's taps and mixers are fitted with a BIOSAFE free flow outlet. Their smooth interior prevents impurities and scale deposits from attaching themselves, therefore, reducing the appearance and spread of bacteria and waterborne germs. Most importantly, DELABIE has developed a unique patent enabling us to produce thermostatic mixers with hot and cold water closing directly on the inlets, making non-return valves redundant. As such, the risk of cross flow between hot and cold water is completely eliminated. This is how the new H9769 dual control thermostatic shower mixer is able to meet the requirements of the new regulations, as is the complete sequential thermostatic mixer range.

A number of electronic controls with the mixing chamber upstream of the closing mechanism, are also equipped with this technology and, therefore, comply with the new French regulation. In the UK it is not currently a requirement that closing mechanisms be located upstream of the mixing chamber in mixers but the benefits are clear to see. This technology eliminates a major risk of bacterial proliferation and, therefore, is a welcome development.

CONVENTIONAL THERMOSTATIC TECHNOLOGY
Not in line with new French regulation



Sooner or later, the non-return valves are obstructed by impurities causing cross flow between the SHW and the SCW, responsible for bacterial development.

Ref. DELABIE: NO_NFMM

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