



guardians of drinking water quality

**DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE**

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6 February 2009

**To: Board Level and Day to Day contacts of Water and Sewerage  
Companies and Water Companies in England and Wales**

Dear Sir/Madam

**GUIDANCE ON SAMPLING DURING ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS**

1. The purpose of this guidance is to advise you of the DWI position and expectations in respect of water companies' responsibilities in meeting the sampling requirements of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000, (2001 Wales) during any adverse weather conditions.
2. This guidance is broadly in line with previous guidance to companies in similar circumstances such as the fuel crisis, (published in 23/2000), and is not intended as a replacement for those.
3. The Inspectorate considers that water companies should be able to carry out a full sampling programme during any period of adverse weather conditions but acknowledges where necessary, companies may make greater use of sampling points which are more accessible (instead of entirely random sampling) in zones to facilitate collection.
4. In the unlikely event of a company facing exceptional difficulty in achieving the collection of samples, it should ensure that its primary consideration is the protection and maintenance of public health. Priority in such a case should therefore be given to compliance sampling at water treatment works and strategic service reservoirs, and bacteriological sampling in zones. Regular bacteriological sampling in zones should not be suspended. Companies if necessary may use points selected by ease of access rather than selected at random to secure compliance with the sampling program. It is however important to obtain a reasonable picture of water quality throughout zones and routes should also be planned and varied with this in mind. Normal sampling must be resumed as soon as normal weather conditions return.

5. Companies may wish to consider applying for supply point authorisation for works and reservoirs which are inaccessible and this should be made to the compliance team at [dwi.compliance@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dwi.compliance@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

### **Catching up of missed samples**

6. In general it is expected that companies will meet their full regulatory sampling programme. Where samples have been missed during any period it is expected that companies will make reasonable effort to re-schedule them before the end of the year. Where shortfalls do occur due consideration will be given by the Inspectorate to the reasons for those shortfalls in deciding whether enforcement action is necessary. The Inspectorate will also acknowledge the role of external conditions

#### Regulation 13 - sampling at treatment works

Where scheduled samples at treatment works were not taken for bacteriological parameters and the sampling frequency is 12 samples per annum it is anticipated that Companies will be able to re-schedule those samples so that the annual sampling frequency requirement under regulation 13 is met. Companies should not re-schedule missed samples at works where the sampling frequency is 52 samples per annum or greater.

#### Regulation 14 - sampling at service reservoirs

Companies should not re-schedule missed samples at service reservoirs unless the rescheduled samples can be taken in the same week as the missed samples.

#### Regulation 15 - sampling in zones

The Inspectorate anticipates that companies should be able re-schedule samples for parameters where the required sampling frequency is 12 samples per year or less.

#### Regulation 16A - sampling at abstraction points

The recognise that companies may not be able to meet their own frequencies set by risk assessment, which may form a critical control point in their supply system and suggest they are guided in this by their WSP and other controls that they have in place in any particular supply system.

### **Enquiries**

This letter is being sent electronically to Board Level and day to day contacts. Please acknowledge receipt by email to [dwi.enquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dwi.enquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk). Hard copies are not being sent but the letter may be freely copied. Any enquiries about the letter should be addressed directly to me via the contact details above.

Copies of this letter are being sent to Pamela Taylor, Chief Executive, Water UK; Richard Wood, Water Supply and Regulation Division, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Claire Bennett, Climate Change and Water Division, Welsh Assembly Government, The National Assembly for Wales; Colin McLaren, Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland; Randal Scott, Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland; Helen Phillips, Natural England and Tony Warn, Environment Agency, Tony Smith, Consumer Council for Water and Kevin Ridout, Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT).

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcus Rink', written in a cursive style.

Marcus Rink  
Deputy Chief Inspector (Operations)