



guardians of drinking water quality

DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE
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DWI Information Letter 11/2004

4 November 2004

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

Dear Sir or Madam

Information requirements following notification of an exceedence of a regulatory standard

Purpose

1. Water Companies are required under regulations 17 and 18 of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000 ¹ (the Regulations) to provide information to the Inspectorate to allow assessment of any breaches of standards and the appropriateness of the companies' response. It has become apparent that the amount and detail of the information supplied varies from Company to Company and the purpose of this letter is to provide guidance on the information required following notification of an exceedence of a standard monitored under Part IV of the Regulations.

Background

2. Water Companies have a duty to monitor the quality of the water they supply to ensure compliance with the wholesomeness requirements under regulation 4.
3. A company may have reason to believe that water it supplies fails or is likely to fail regulation 4(2). On occasion, water may be regarded as unwholesome by virtue of regulation 4(4) or 4(5). When a departure has not been authorised, in addition to the Data Table submitted for monthly Compliance data returns, a Company shall identify in respect of Schedule 1 parameters (in accordance with regulation 17 (2)):
 - a. the cause and extent of the failure or the apprehended failure;
 - b. the parameter(s) involved in the failure or the apprehended failure; and
 - c. whether the failure or the apprehended failure can be attributable to the domestic plumbing, the maintenance of that system; or neither.

4. When a departure has been authorised, the above applies only to those parameters that are not specified in the authorisation and only to the parameter authorised if the detected concentration exceeds the value specified in the authorisation.
5. When a company has reason to believe that water it supplies does not meet the specifications for indicator parameters set out in Schedule 2, in addition to the Data Table submitted for monthly Compliance data returns, it shall identify (in accordance with regulation 18 (1)):
 - a. the reason why the specifications are not met;
 - b. the indicator parameter(s) for which the specification is not met; and
 - c. if the specification for coliform bacteria or colony counts is not met, whether that inability is attributable to the domestic plumbing, the maintenance of that system; or neither.
6. As soon as maybe, once the failure has been identified, the company shall advise the Secretary of State, in practice the Inspectorate;
 - a. of those matters;
 - b. whether the breach of the parameter(s) is likely to recur; and
 - c. the action taken by the company (if any) in relation to failures attributable to the domestic distribution system.
7. When the failure has been attributed to the domestic distribution system, the company shall at the same time that it notifies the Inspectorate, also notify in writing any consumer(s) affected by the failure and advise them of the remedial action required to rectify the failure. Copies of that notice shall be sent to the Inspectorate and the relevant local authority.

Information requirements

8. To facilitate the Inspectorate's assessment of the breaches of standards and the appropriateness of the companies' response, the information listed in Appendix A is required. This should be in the format detailed in Appendix B. Similar information should also be supplied if no PCV or specification is exceeded but the Company considers the "likely to fail" or "reason to believe" criteria are triggered.

Enquiries

9. Any enquiries about the letter should be addressed to John Gray (John.Gray@defra.gsi.gov.uk) (020 7082 8042). I am copying this letter for information to Pamela Taylor, Chief Executive, Water UK; Richard Wood, Water Supply and Regulation Division, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; June Milligan, Environment Division, National Assembly for Wales; Tim Hooton, Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland;

Randal Scott, Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland; Rowena Tye, Office of Water Services.

10. This letter is being sent electronically. Please acknowledge receipt by e-mail to dwi.informationletters@defra.gsi.gov.uk. Hard copies are not being sent.

This letter may be freely copied.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeni Colbourne', written over a horizontal line.

Prof Jeni Colbourne
Chief Inspector
Drinking Water Inspectorate

¹Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2001 in Wales.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B