



guardians of drinking water quality

## DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE

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DWI Information Letter 13/2004

### **To: Board Level Contacts of Water and Sewerage Companies in England and Wales**

Dear Sir or Madam

### **COMMON CARRIAGE: GUIDANCE ON THE DRINKING WATER QUALITY ASPECTS**

#### **Background**

1. In February 2000 the Inspectorate issued guidance to all parties considering common carriage operations. The guidance looked at the associated drinking water quality issues and was intended to assist the various parties in drawing up contracts.
2. The Water Act 2003 allows for the development of effective competition in the water industry in England and Wales. However it is accepted that increasing competition must not jeopardise public health or make the water supplied unacceptable to consumers. It is therefore both timely and appropriate to review and revise the original guidance.

#### **Purpose**

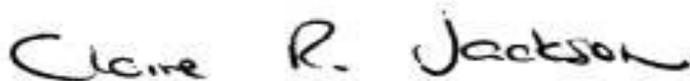
3. The purpose of this letter is to share with the industry and others the Inspectorate's revised guidance, a copy of which is attached. The guidance is for advice only and has no legal status. Furthermore it is not prescriptive, nor does it go into great detail. Rather it can be considered as an extended checklist, covering both regulatory and operational matters which need to be considered to ensure that drinking water quality is not compromised.
4. Some of the key messages are:
  - Holders of combined licences will be subject to the same level of regulation by the Inspectorate as the incumbent water undertakers.

- If drinking water quality incidents are to be avoided, there must be effective control of all inputs into the distribution system under common carriage. This means that the incumbent water undertaker must have overall control of the system.
  - In most cases it should be possible to accommodate additional sources or supplies under common carriage. However it is important that each situation is evaluated fully and planned and executed carefully.
  - There will be some circumstances, such as mixing incompatible waters, in which it would be detrimental to proceed on water quality grounds. In these situations common carriage should be avoided.
5. The guidance is a stand alone document, which will be reviewed and revised as experience is gained in the operation of common carriage or if unforeseen water quality issues arise.

## Enquiries

6. Any enquiries about this letter or the guidance should be addressed to Jane Allen (020 7082 8035) or to myself. We will be pleased to discuss the contents with potential licensees, although we would suggest that they assemble some basic information about their proposed water sources and supplies before making contact.
7. Copies of this letter are being sent 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, The National Assembly for Wales; Tim Hooton, Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland; Randal Scott, Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland; and Rowena Tye and Beryl Brown, Office of Water Services.
8. This letter is being sent electronically to Board Level and Day to Day contacts in the water industry and to other interested parties. Hard copies are not being sent but the letter may be freely copied. Please acknowledge receipt by email to: [dwi.informationletters@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dwi.informationletters@defra.gsi.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely



**Miss C R Jackson**  
Deputy Chief Inspector of Drinking Water

## Guidance on the water quality aspects of Common Carriage