



Guardians of drinking water quality

## DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE

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DWI Information Letter 05/2007

1 June 2007

### **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 THE WATER SUPPLY (WATER QUALITY) REGULATIONS 2000/2001 SPECIFIC TO PFOS (PERFLUOROOCTANE SULPHONATE) AND PFOA (PERFLUOROOCTANOIC ACID) CONCENTRATIONS IN DRINKING WATER**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the publication of the guidance document entitled "Guidance on the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000/01 specific to PFOS (perfluorooctane sulphonate) and PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) concentrations in drinking water". The document is enclosed with this letter and will shortly be placed on the Inspectorate's website ([www.dwi.gov.uk](http://www.dwi.gov.uk)) in Adobe® (pdf) format.

#### **Detail**

As part of its regulatory duties DWI provides technical advice to ministers on drinking water quality and guidance to the water industry on compliance with the relevant regulations to enable water companies to fulfil their statutory obligations regarding the safety of drinking water supplies.

Following concerns about the potential impact of environmental PFOS contamination on drinking water sources, specific advice was provided previously in response to the Buncefield oil depot fire. This was based on the best available information from independent health advisors. Following the Committee on Toxicity's\* subsequent review of PFOS and PFOA, independent advice to the Inspectorate was updated. The Inspectorate has used this latest advice to inform guidance which is more widely applicable to the water industry as a whole.

Although the Inspectorate is not aware that either PFOS or PFOA is present in drinking water at levels which would cause concern anywhere in England or Wales, the persistent nature of these compounds, and the wide variety of potential sources are such that the Inspectorate considers it appropriate to provide guidance to water companies on a precautionary basis. Companies are reminded of the need to consider this guidance in the light of other advice received from local health professionals or their own independent medical adviser should the need arise in the future for specific action to be taken to safeguard any given drinking water supply.

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; Matthew Quinn, Environment Division, Welsh Assembly Government; Colin McLaren, Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland; Randal Scott, Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland; Tony Smith and Chairs of the Regional Consumer Council for Water; Rowena Tye for Office of Water Services; Tony Warn, Environment Agency; Nigel Harrison, Food Standards Agency; and Gary Coleman at the Health Protection Agency.

This letter is being sent electronically to Board Level and day to day contacts. Please acknowledge receipt by email to [dwi.informationletters@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dwi.informationletters@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.

Yours faithfully



**Dr Jim Foster**  
**Deputy Chief Inspector (Science & Strategy)**

\* The Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) is an independent scientific committee that provides advice to the Food Standards Agency, the Department of Health and other Government Departments and Agencies on matters concerning the toxicity of chemicals