



guardians of drinking water quality

DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE

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Information Letter 08/07

30 November 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 INTERPRETATION OF REGULATION 16(2)(d)(i) OF THE WATER SUPPLY (WATER QUALITY) REGULATIONS 2000 (2001 IN WALES)

Background

1. Regulation 16(2)(d)(i) of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000 in England and 2001 in Wales (the Regulations) requires water companies in England and Wales to ensure that samples are analysed by or under the supervision of a person who is competent to perform that task.
2. In recent years audits in some laboratories have identified occasions when this requirement has not been complied with. Over many years the number of qualified and experienced analysts in laboratories has reduced significantly. At the same time the availability of courses leading to appropriate scientific qualifications has also reduced, making it more difficult to recruit and train competent analysts. There is also a lack of understanding and an absence of guidance on the meaning of the terms “competent person” and “task” in respect of the regulatory requirement.
3. In response the Inspectorate and the other UK drinking water quality regulators entered into a dialogue with a group of experts from laboratories to develop detailed guidance on the meaning of the requirement and how it can be demonstrably met, along with a realistic timetable for implementation.

Purpose

4. The purpose of this letter is to share with the industry the outcome of these deliberations, which is intended to provide a pragmatic way forward for the industry.
5. The guidance takes the form of a stand alone document, a copy of which is attached. The guidance will be reviewed and revised at regular intervals and in the light of experience. The Inspectorate expects companies to take account of the guidance in formulating their analyst training procedures and development programmes and to implement them in line with the timescale included in the guidance.
6. During the transitional arrangements, the Inspectorate's duty to consider enforcement action if there is evidence of significant incompetence remains unfettered.

Enquiries

7. 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, The National Assembly for Wales; Colin McLaren, Drinking Water Quality Unit SEERAD; Randal Scott, Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland; David Lowe, United Kingdom Accreditation Service; and Rowena Tye, Office of Water Services.
8. This letter is being sent electronically to Board Level contacts. Please acknowledge receipt by email to 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 Malcolm Morgan (malcolm.morgan@defra.gsi.gov.uk) or to me.

Yours sincerely



Milo Purcell
Deputy Chief Inspector (Regulations)