



DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE

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15th September 2009

Information Letter 09/09

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

Dear Sir/Madam

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Information Letter is to advise you of the publication of the document '*Drinking Water Safety – Guidance for health and water professionals*'. This is a joint publication edited by Professor Jeni Colbourne – Chief Inspector of Drinking Water and Professor Nigel Lightfoot Chief Advisor, Health Protection Agency.

2. Background

In 2007 there was a major water supply incident involving the loss of water supplies to 160,000 properties in Cheltenham, Gloucester, Tewkesbury and a large part of rural Gloucestershire due to the waterworks being inundated with flood water. Subsequent to this, and other incidents, national level discussions between DWI and the Health Protection Agency (HPA) led to an agreement to prepare and publish joint guidance to health and water professionals in support of drinking water quality risk assessments and the issuing of consumer protection advice. The publication of guidance also responds to recommendations in *The Pitt Review – Lessons learned from the 2007 floods*.

The guidance to be published on 15th September 2009 on the HPA and DWI websites sets out the structure and legal framework of the water industry in England and Wales and describes the arrangements in place for securing the quality and safety of drinking water on a day-to-day basis.

This guidance document closely follows the structure of '*Drinking Water Standards and Science*', published in 2005 by DWI to inform the public how drinking water is regulated, safeguarded and improved where necessary.

This guidance contains nothing new and we do not believe that its adoption will require any special action to be taken by the water industry or health professionals over and above its incorporation into existing training regimes, and its inclusion in water supply and public health operating and emergency management procedures.

It is intended that DWI will keep the internet version of this guidance document under regular review and notify all water and health professionals of any updates.

Hard copies will be sent to day-to-day contacts in water companies in the week commencing 28th September 2009.

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; Olwen Minney, Water Management Team, Welsh Assembly Government; Colin McLaren, Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland; Margaret Herron, Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland; Tony Smith and Chairs of the Regional Consumer Council for Water; Kevin Ridout, for Office of Water Services; Tony Warn, Environment Agency; Nigel Harrison, Food Standards Agency; and Frances Pollitt 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.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 Jeni Colbourne.

Yours faithfully



Prof. Jeni Colbourne MBE
Chief Inspector of Drinking Water