



**DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE**

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30 March 2011

DWI Information Letter 04/2011

**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 general provisions for monitoring of parameters relevant to radioactivity.**

**Purpose**

This letter sets out the circumstances where the cessation of monitoring for parameters relevant to radioactivity permitted by a waiver under Regulation 6(7) of The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000, (as amended 2010), in England and 2010 in Wales, (The Regulations), no longer apply.

**Detail**

Following a number of explosions and fires at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan as a result of the earthquake and tsunami on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2011, it is known that there has been some release of radioactivity in the form of Iodine-131, ( $I^{131}$ ). Furthermore detection of plutonium in the soil at the plant has been reported and concern exists around the release of caesium-137, ( $Cs^{137}$ ), drawing parallels with the nuclear accident in Chernobyl in 1986.

There have been recent media stories regarding the prohibition of drinking water supplies to infants in Tokyo on the basis of detection of radioactive iodine.

Reports have now been made of the detection of the minute traces of iodine in air samples, in Oxfordshire and Glasgow. The Health Protection Agency have issued advice, available on its' web site, stating, "There is no health risk to people living in the UK from the release of radioactive material from the Japanese nuclear power plant".

Stories running in the press have raised concerns amongst the media and public in the UK regarding water supplies despite the distances involved and this has inevitably resulted in the DWI receiving enquiries from both the public and water companies on the safety and monitoring of drinking water supplies. This subject does not arise regularly but the DWI would expect that the industry has accurate and appropriate scripts for consumers contacting companies with regard how their supplies are protected from radioactivity.

The DWI is actively providing advice alongside HPA throughout this situation on the topic of drinking water in the UK, updating the Q&A's as appropriate. Companies are able to inform themselves of the current Q&A's at the HPA web site using the following link:

[http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb\\_C/1296683606539](http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1296683606539)

Coordination of company and DWI position statements and any Q&A's should be made through Sue Pennison on the above number.

## **Radioactivity Monitoring**

With specific reference to radioactivity monitoring, companies must review their risk assessment where conditions make it relevant as required by Regulation 27 in England and Regulation 28 in Wales of The Regulations. Current information on the spread of radioactivity would not necessarily make a review relevant.

However, were this to change, and even where a waiver for the cessation of radioactivity monitoring has been granted under Regulation 6(7) of The Regulations, a change in risk, based upon operational monitoring, (as advised within the waivers), or otherwise informed, would supersede the conditions upon which the notice was issued. This letter serves as the notice in writing under regulation 6(8) of The Regulations withdrawing any waiver should these conditions occur.

Companies would either then be expected to reapply for a change in condition of the notice under 6(7) of The Regulations or where the risk is assessed as significant to human health, a notification to the DWI specifying the causal factors.

## Enquiries

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](mailto: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 me via the contact details above.

Copies of this letter are being sent to Pamela Taylor, Chief Executive, Water UK; John Bourne, Water Supply and Regulation Division, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Olwen Minney, Water Management Team, Welsh Assembly Government; Philip Anderson, 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; Noel Wheatley, Ofwat; Tony Warn, Environment Agency; Jane Downes, Food Standards Agency; and Frances Pollitt at the Health Protection Agency.

Any enquiries regarding this letter should be made directly to me using the contact details at the head of this letter.

Yours faithfully.



Marcus Rink  
Deputy Chief Inspector (Operations)