



DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE

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Information Letter 05/2013

Board Level and Day to Day contacts of Water Companies, Environmental Health contacts of local authorities in England and Wales, and Laboratory Contacts

Dear Sir / Madam

DRINKING WATER ANALYSIS AND THE REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this letter is to inform water companies, local authorities and laboratories about the regulatory requirements for drinking water testing for both public and private water supplies, the agreement between DWI and UKAS, and the revised Drinking Water Testing Specification (UKAS Lab 37 Accreditation Requirements).

This letter updates previous Information Letter 02/2012 on this subject.

2. Background

- 2.1 To comply with the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations and the Private Water Supplies Regulations samples collected in England and Wales must be tested in a laboratory that has the appropriate systems in place.
- 2.2 Transposed from EC Directive 98/83/EC, requirements in respect of the collection, transport and analysis of samples include an obligation for laboratories to employ a system of analytical control that is subject to checking by an approved body from time to time. The department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), has appointed the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) as the sole accreditation body in the UK therefore UKAS is deemed the approved person (body) for the purposes of assessing drinking water testing facilities in accordance ISO/IEC 17025 and the Drinking Water Testing Specification (DWTS).

- 2.3 The Drinking Water Testing Specification ensures that a laboratory is operating to specific standards for drinking water sampling and analysis.
- 2.4 The Inspectorate's focus initially has been to reinforce the requirement for accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 and this was reflected in an agreement between DWI and UKAS, which was the subject of previous information letters encouraging laboratories to seek UKAS accreditation under ISO/IEC 17025 to the Drinking Water Testing specification (DWTS). The Inspectorate is pleased to note that a number of laboratories have since obtained accreditation to the DWTS specification. In accordance with the principles of better regulation the agreement between DWI and UKAS has been reviewed and updated together with the Drinking Water Testing Specification. These revisions reflect the developments in analytical capability by making UKAS accreditation under ISO/IEC 17025 to Drinking Water Testing Specification (DWTS) a mandatory requirement for all sampling, transport and analysis of drinking water that falls in scope of the regulations.
- 2.5 The accreditation of any organisation carrying out regulatory drinking water quality sampling and analysis to DWTS will include all compliance parameters and also any parameters analysed for the purposes of informing operational decisions; whether or not they are listed in the regulations.
- 2.6 For organisations that undertake sampling activities only, where analysis is subcontracted to another organisation, the sampling activity and transport of samples must be accredited under ISO/IEC 17025 to DWTS.
- 2.7 There are a number of organisations already providing a full DWTS accredited service covering the collection, transportation and analysis of samples. The Inspectorate will continue to work closely with industry and local authorities to secure that all drinking water monitoring activities in England and Wales are carried out to the required standard by accredited organisations as soon as practicable.
- 2.8 The updated DWI/UKAS agreement maintains the powers of DWI to carry out a risk informed audit of any organisation carrying out sampling or analysis of drinking water, however, it also makes clear that once accredited, an organisation will not be regularly audited by DWI.
- 2.9 The absence of accreditation to DWTS implies that an organisation or laboratory is unlikely to meet the minimum requirements of the Regulations when carrying out drinking water analysis. This information must be taken into consideration by water companies, local authorities and private water supply owners, prior to the procurement of drinking water monitoring services.

- 2.10 The revision to the agreement between DWI and UKAS forms the basis of the UKAS Lab 37 document which is available on the UKAS website.
- 2.11 A list of companies providing DWTS accredited services can be found using www.dwi.gov.uk and www.ukas.com
3. This letter is being sent electronically to board level and day to day contacts of water companies, environmental health contacts of local authorities in England and Wales, and laboratory contacts.
4. Copies of this letter are being sent to Pamela Taylor, Chief Executive, Water UK; Carol Skilling, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Olwen Minney Welsh Government; Sue Petch, 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; Nick Cartwright, Environment Agency; Jane Downes, Food Standards Agency; Stephen Moreton and Frances Pollitt, Health Protection Agency.
5. 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 Shaun Jones at shaun.jones@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely



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Deputy Chief Inspector
(Operations)