



DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE

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11 September 2020

Information Letter 06/2020

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

Dear Sir/Madam

Assessment of the limitations for chemicals and treatment products intended for the treatment of drinking water.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this letter is to advise water companies of the Inspectorate's position and expectations in respect of water companies' responsibilities in meeting the requirements of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016 (England) as amended by the Water Supply (Water Quality) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 and the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Miscellaneous Amendments etc.) Regulations 2019 – SI No. 526; and the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Wales) 2018, **in the context of supplies of treatment chemicals.**

Introduction

2. The Regulations require water supplied to premises intended for human consumption to be wholesome. In order to fulfil this requirement water suppliers must carry out a risk assessment of each of their treatment works and connected supply systems, in order to establish whether there is a significant risk of supplying water that could constitute a potential danger to human health or is likely to be unwholesome. Where it is likely that a risk assessment would establish this situation, a supplier must notify the DWI, specifying the relevant factors.
3. As a result of planned closures of production and/or unplanned occurrences at suppliers there is a potential change in risk to supplies of critical water treatment chemicals. Currently there are known issues that may affect availability of the following chemicals: Ferric sulphate, ultra-low bromine (ULB) sodium hypochlorite and low-density anthracite but

supplies of other chemicals may also be at risk.

Expectation

4. Water suppliers are expected to plan for foreseeable risks to water supplies, including alternative sourcing of all critical treatment chemicals; re-configuration of water treatment processes where possible to use alternative treatment chemicals; supply contingencies and public notifications.
5. We consider water suppliers to have been notified of a changing risk profile associated with the treatment chemicals specified in paragraph 3 and are now required to provide the Inspectorate with details of risk assessments that cover the treatment works and distribution sites where these chemicals are used, and measures in place to mitigate the risk of unplanned changes to their availability.
6. The following is a list of information which companies should provide to the Inspectorate. This is a minimum expectation and is not considered exhaustive.
7. **Companies are reminded of the need to update their drinking water safety plans** in light of the information in this letter and resubmit any regulation 28 lines that have been updated in response to these risks.

Planned mitigations e.g. Alternative supplies

Please supply for your company the following assessed risks and mitigations for chemical and material supplies, together with an overview risk and impact statement for company works, and population at risk. **Please identify clearly** those works, which use the chemicals specified in paragraph 3 and whether you consider you shall have adequate mitigations to address any chemical supply issues.

8. The steps being taken to increase stocks of ferric sulphate, ultra-low bromine sodium hypochlorite, and low-density anthracite.
9. Mitigations where supply becomes unsustainable or unavailable, including for example alternative coagulants, and changes to dosing arrangements.
10. Changes in supply configuration and plans to introduce standby sources, where appropriate treatment cannot be maintained.

Responsive Contingencies

11. The control measures being put in place where no alternatives exist to the supply area.

12. The conditions under which consumer advice would be issued and what this advice would consist of.

Other Considerations

13. Please provide details of any other actions the company are taking to address this risk.

Companies are required to provide a report (word document) of their response to the points raised in this letter. This should be emailed to dwimonthlydata@defra.gov.uk by **Friday 18 September 2020**.

Any enquiries regarding this letter should be made to Martin Bird by email to martin.bird@defra.gov.uk .

This letter is being sent electronically to **Board Level and day to day** contacts. Please acknowledge receipt by email to dwi.enquiries@defra.gov.uk . Hard copies are not being sent but the letter may be freely copied.

Copies of this letter are being sent to Christine McGourty, Chief Executive, Water UK; Jan Dixon and Kirstin Green, Deputy Directors Water Quality, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Eifiona Williams, Water Management Team, Welsh Government; Sue Petch, Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland; Catriona Davis, Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland; Tony Smith and Chairs of the Regional Consumer Council for Water; Alison Cullen, Ofwat; Simon Moody, Environment Agency; Benedict Duncan, Food Standards Agency; and Stephen Robjohns at Public Health England.

Yours sincerely



Marcus Rink
Chief Inspector of Water