

CPHM Newsletter

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Welcome!

This is our first newsletter aimed at improving communications with CPHMs who have an interest in drinking water quality issues. I recognise that drinking water represents a very small part of the CPHM role and that it is quite unusual for significant water quality issues to land in your in-trays. That is exactly how it should be. However, when problems do occur, it is important that you, and colleagues who are covering out of hours, are aware of how the water industry in Scotland works and what DWQR can do to assist you. We intend producing a short electronic newsletter twice a year. It will include news on what we are doing with both public and private supplies and focus on particular issues. We will also publish short summaries of incidents we have investigated as I believe this information should be circulated more widely than just in the local area. I hope that you will find the newsletter both helpful and interesting and will share it with colleagues who only have an occasional involvement with drinking water. My contact details are at the top of the page – please get in touch if you have any suggestions or would like assistance with a drinking water quality issue.



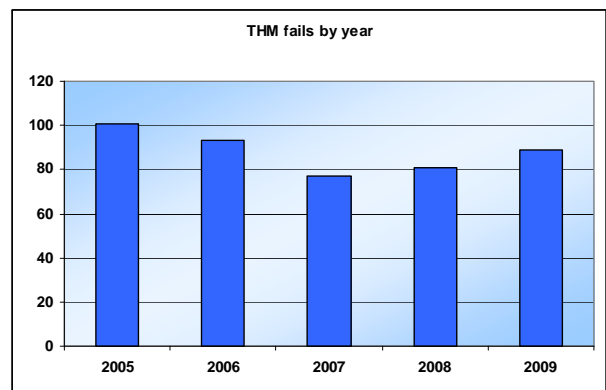
Colin McLaren
Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland

Event Reporting – An Update

We know many of you are frustrated by the current format of Scottish Water Event Forms. We have been working with Scottish Water to develop a system of electronic event reporting whereby only significant events are reported immediately and less serious failures are reported in a monthly exception report. DWQR will continue to assess every event and failure and take action where necessary. It is taking longer than expected to develop the IT reporting system necessary for this new approach. Consequently, the interim

reporting format developed by Scottish Water has been in use for far longer than originally anticipated. We hope that once the new system is in place, it will greatly streamline the event monitoring process and ensure all of us are not swamped by trivial failure reports. Once the new system is ready we will work with CPHMs and HPS to ensure that everyone is comfortable with it.

THM Compliance



As always at this time, we are looking at the data for the previous year. The DWQR Annual report will be published later in the year, but it is apparent that, unlike most parameters, THMs are not showing an improving trend. This is disappointing as there has been much investment in water treatment, especially in the North and islands. It is evident that there are a number of factors at work here and DWQR is currently investigating with a view to reporting later in the year.

Private Water Supplies

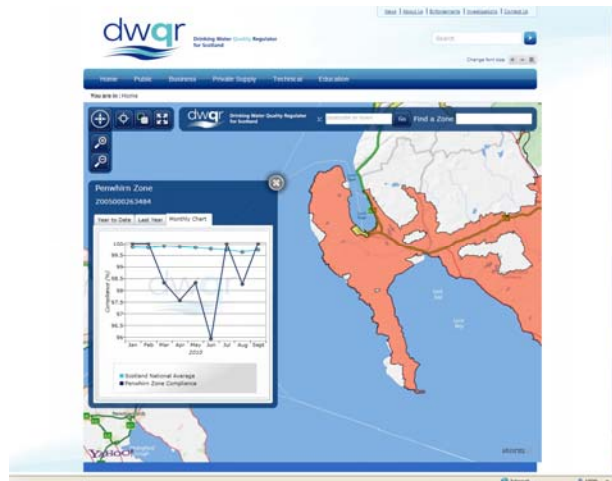
Private water supplies serve a relatively small proportion of the Scottish population, but are significant in terms of their potential to have an adverse impact on health due to poor quality water. The new private water supply regulations have been in place for four years now. These include increased water quality sampling of the larger supplies and those serving commercial activities. DWQR is starting to build up a picture of the quality of these supplies at a national level. We hope to bring you more information on private water supplies in future newsletters.

INCIDENT SUMMARY

Turret WTW, Crieff, Oct 2009

Turret WTW is located in Perthshire, but supplies a large part of Stirling and Falkirk as well. At the time of the incident, the works was undergoing a major upgrade to the treatment process. During the installation of a new chlorine contact tank, the automatic pH control system that regulates the dosing of lime was taken out of automatic mode and run manually. On the night of the incident, the lime dosing could not keep pace with changes in flow and began to overdose. At the same time, the new post contact tank pH monitor, that would have given an early warning of problems, froze and did not alert staff to the problem. Eventually, the final water high pH alarm was triggered and an operator attended site, eventually bringing the situation under control although the pH leaving the treatment works remained above the 9.5 upper standard for 12 hours.

Scottish Water has improved monitoring instrumentation at the site. DWQR has requested that processes and procedures for commissioning new assets are improved, along with a strengthened response to ensuring and demonstrating that consumers are protected during incidents of this nature.



INCIDENT SUMMARY

Invercannie WTW, Aberdeenshire, Dec 2009

Invercannie WTW abstracts water from the River Dee, and after treatment utilising coagulation and ultrafiltration membrane supplies over 6,000 properties in the Deeside area as well as contributing to the Aberdeen water supply. Due to a fault in a Programmable Logics Controller (PLC), which provides zone continuous electronic control of the treatment process, partially treated water was allowed to pass through the works overnight. This resulted in greatly reduced chlorine levels in the water passing to supply. The incident developed because the faulty PLC was installed with a key piece of software missing. Had it been in place it would have detected the fault and raised an alarm. A contributing factor was the lack of operational staff on-site at the time. Scottish Water have since replaced the PLC and put in place procedures to ensure adequate operational cover when situations such as those that arose at Invercannie occur in the future.

Inspection Programme

DWQR undertakes an annual programme of audits of Scottish Water treatment works, distribution systems, laboratories and consumer complaints about water quality. In the latter part of 2009, 19 treatment works were inspected and 101 recommendations made. For the first time we included a review of the risks identified in Drinking Water Safety Plans as part of the audit. We are currently focussing on inspections of distribution systems. These look at how Scottish Water is managing water quality in its pipework and storage points, and how it undertakes work such as burst main repairs.

DWQR Website

In July 2009, the new DWQR website was launched. The new site is much more consumer-friendly, with explanations of common problems and an area for children. The site also contains a technical section for those with a deeper interest in water quality, and DWQR reports on incidents and inspections are now being posted here. The new site also offers consumers the ability to check basic compliance data for their water supply zone, using an innovative mapping tool (below). You can access the website at www.dwqr.org.uk.

Can we help?

If you have an issue with a drinking water matter in your area or simply require some support or guidance please contact us using the contact details at the top of the first page.