



Drinking Water Quality Regulator  
for Scotland

# Incident Assessment

Afton RSZ  
Microbiological Failure  
16 August 2012

DWQR Inspector:  
William Byers

## Summary of Incident

Work to install a pressure reducing valve and bypass was carried out on the water mains near Hurlford in Ayrshire on 16 August 2012. As part of the process to verify that the works had been carried out in accordance with hygiene code procedures a water sample is required to be taken. The sample did not pass the microbiological standards, showing a detection of 63 Coliforms.

Following discussions with the Consultant in Public Health Medicine (CPHM), a precautionary boil water notice was issued and further sampling was arranged across a wider area to establish whether there was any extensive contamination caused by the works. These samples confirmed that there was no further detections against microbiological standards in the supply and the restrictions on use were lifted on the afternoon of 18 August.

## DWQR Assessment of Cause of Incident

An incident was declared by DWQR due to the necessity to impose restrictions on water use to a number of households in the area. Examination of the sample records and other works information show that the original failing sample had been taken upstream of the works and this is therefore unrepresentative of any water supply that could have been contaminated by the valve installation. The wider sampling taken in response to the failure were taken correctly, from a range of properties in the immediate and downstream areas of the works and show there to be no concerns of contamination. The resample taken from the original failing property also passed and the problem is attributed to hygiene issues at the consumer tap.

## DWQR Assessment of Actions Taken by Scottish Water

DWQR is satisfied that Scottish water took appropriate action in response to the possible contamination of the supply. Scottish Water failed however to take the post repair sample from a suitable downstream location and this is unacceptable. Sampling must be able to provide confidence in the impact of any intrusive works on the water mains network. Upstream sampling only, cannot serve this need and may provide misleading information of water quality.

Scottish Water identified an action to address this failing which DWQR accepts was appropriate.

