



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Environment Group

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Our ref: 2DWE/25/2

28 April 2004

Information Letter 2/2004

Dear George

THE WATER SUPPLY (WATER QUALITY) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2001: REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF ANALYTICAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF LEAD

Background

1. On 25 December 2003, new standards for wholesomeness in the Water Supply (Water Quality) (Scotland) Regulations 2001 (the New Regulations) came into force. These included a stricter interim standard for lead of 25 µg/l. The final standard of 10 µg/l will apply from 25 December 2013. In addition, there is a water treatment requirement in the New Regulations that applies where there is a risk ("the prescribed risk") that water would, after leaving the provider's pipes, contain a concentration of lead in excess of 10 µg/l
2. In 2002, the Division had concerns that some of the analytical methods used by water providers and their laboratories for the analysis of lead may not be able either to adequately demonstrate compliance with the interim standard, or to demonstrate that the prescribed risk did not exist or had been eliminated or reduced to a minimum.
3. In Information Letter 1/2003 the Division requested information on the performance of analytical methods used for the analysis of lead. The Division is also aware of a report commissioned by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) in respect of England and Wales. Mr Peter Walker, consultant, was appointed to assess the data provided by the industry in England and Wales and he has reported his findings to the DWI.



Purpose

4. The purpose of this letter is to present the findings of Mr Walker's report. The Division endorses his conclusions and recommendations. A copy of the report is enclosed with this letter.

“A Report on the Results of the Survey of Analytical Performance for the Measurement of Lead within the Laboratories of English and Welsh Water Companies” (The Report)

5. Mr Walker reviewed methodology, validation and quality control performance for each analytical method, and his general findings, conclusions and recommendations are contained in the Report.

6. You should ensure that copies of this letter and the Report are passed to all laboratories carrying out regulatory drinking water analysis for Scottish Water.

7. The Division will use the Report to inform its decisions on the appropriateness of current arrangements for the analysis of lead and assessing the degree to which Scottish Water have demonstrated optimisation of plumbosolvency control. Scottish Water and their analytical laboratories will be expected to implement the relevant recommendations.

Other matters

8. During 2003 one laboratory advised the DWI of problems it was experiencing with biased results of interlaboratory proficiency testing (external analytical quality control).

9. Investigations identified the the cause as the use of an inappropriate bought in stock lead standard for calibration. The laboratory was using a stock prepared for atomic absorption spectroscopy when using inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICPMS). Changing to a stock standard prepared for use with ICPMS cured the problem.

10. This has served as a timely reminder to all laboratories that they should ensure that they always use the appropriate grade and type of bought in pre-prepared standards and reagents, or the appropriate grade of pure chemical for preparing standards and reagents for all analyses.

Further Information

11. A copy of this letter and report is being sent to Willie Rowbottom, Chief Scientist and Allan Conner, General Manager – Laboratories and Sampling



Enquiries about this letter

12. Enquiries about this letter should be addressed to Donald Reid (Tel No: 0131 244 0278) or Email: Donald.reid@scotland.gsi.gov.uk. Please acknowledge receipt of this letter using the attached form.

Yours sincerely

Tim Hooton



The Environment Group is part of the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department

Please complete the acknowledgement below and return it to:

Ewan J Young
Scottish Executive
Environment Group
Drinking Water Quality Division
Area 1-H
Victoria Quay
EDINBURGH
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I acknowledge receipt of Information Letter 2/2004

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THE MEASUREMENT OF LEAD**

Signed _____

Name _____

Position _____

Address _____

Date _____

