

Technical Inspection of Scottish Water's Top Up Taps

Grassmarket and Royal Mile, Edinburgh

16/12/2020

DWQR Staff Present

Colette Robertson-Kellie, Moira Malcolm

Scottish Water Staff Present

Scott McColm (Development Project Manager)

Contractors (Mitie) Present

David Niven (Mobile Supervisor), Kirk Cockburn (Service Support Manager)

Summary of Inspection

Overall Summary

The cleaning of Scottish Water's Top Up Taps (TUT) by contractors in Edinburgh's Grassmarket and Royal Mile was observed by DWQR staff in response to a failure of the Clostridium perfringens standard from a TUT in Glasgow (Event 11359).

The Grassmarket TUT was the first to be cleaned. It was noted that the contractor took great effort to ensure that the area was kept safe for members of the public, and took photographs pre and post cleaning for reporting back to Scottish Water. During the cleaning it was observed that the contractor wiped the top of the unit before using the same cloth to wipe the water spout; the cleaning procedure states that the water spout should not be touched, but this procedure was not followed. The contractors' van was inspected, and it was noted that the cloths used for cleaning the TUT were kept in supermarket carrier bags, used and clean cloths were not adequately separated, and some of the cloths used were pieces of torn up sheet.

Scottish Water's Development Project Manager joined the DWQR staff and the cleaning contractors at the TUT on the Royal Mile, and was asked to take a sample from the tap prior to the tap being cleaned, and then after being cleaned but without the tap being sterilised, to mimic normal post cleaning conditions as the contractor does not sterilise the tap. A sample was then taken post tap sterilisation to check on the microbiological quality of the supply without the influence of the condition of the tap. Sample results pre cleaning complied with microbiological standards, but the sample taken post cleaning failed the Clostridium perfringens standard with 1 CFU per 100ml; there was also a slight increase in the 22°C colony count (from 10 to 29 cfu in 100ml) . The sample taken post cleaning and post tap sterilisation complied with standards. This low level failure following cleaning suggests that the cleaning process by contractors needs to be amended.

To address concerns noted at the audit with the cleaning of the top up taps, Scottish Water has had meetings with the contractor to develop an Improvement Plan. The actions confirmed were:

1. Communications were sent by the contractor to all their Managers to reiterate that under no circumstance should the nozzle of any TUT be touched. Risk Assessment Method Statements (RAMS) and Safe System of Work (SSOW) documentation were also sent out to all Managers and the importance of strictly adhering to the RAMS was re-emphasised
2. Refresher training on deep cleaning TUT and audits is to be carried out with all contractor mobile operatives.
3. Disposable cloths are to be used for the weekly clean of TUT.
4. Transparent and labelled boxes are to be supplied to all vans. This, along with colour coding of boxes should give a clear indication that clean cloths have been separated from dirty cloths and help with general housekeeping of vans.