

Killin WTW Hydrocarbons 20th February 2026

Event No. 16779

Event Category: Major

On the 20 February 2026, consumers in the Killin water supply zone reported a diesel/oil taste and odour to their drinking water supply. A precautionary Do Not Drink, Cook, or Wash restriction of use notice was issued from 15:00 on 20 February for the entire operational area downstream of Killin WTW (the population affected was approximately 793). Following a review of sample results in consultation with the health board this restriction was downgraded to a Do Not Drink or Cook notice from the evening of 22 February. The restriction of use was fully removed on the afternoon of the 24 February.

A total of 198 samples were taken from the 20 February to 30 March covering the water treatment works and supply zone. In summary, whilst the water supplied by Killin WTW contained hydrocarbons at concentrations that may be detected by consumers there were no breaches of 24 hour and 7-day toxicology thresholds. Five samples failed the odour standard and were reported as 'Petrol'.

Following extensive flushing activity of the distribution network, which resulted in some disturbance of deposits, 21 exceedances of regulatory water quality standards were encountered and these included: benzo(a)pyrene (2, isolated to a single property), Iron (9), Manganese (6), Turbidity (3) and aluminium (1). A total of 42 consumer contacts were received. Of these, 39 were logged as 'solvent/taste/smell', and three for colour.

The incident was caused by a diesel spill into the River Dochart on the evening of the 19 February from a storage tank at the Lix Toll Fuel station located approximately 1.5 miles upstream of the intake feeding Killin WTW.

Contaminated water passed through the water treatment system into distribution with Scottish Water being unaware until consumers started reporting an unusual taste and odour from 08:52 on the 20 February.

Factors contributing to the incident included deficiencies in the Regulation 30 risk assessment for the Killin supply system, which failed to identify the risk of hydrocarbon contamination within the catchment and the need for appropriate mitigation measures. In addition, this investigation identified shortcomings in incident notification arrangements. Although the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) became aware of the pollution incident on the evening of 19 February, Scottish Water was not notified because SEPA incorrectly assumed that Scottish Water personnel in the area were already aware of the event. Both SEPA and Scottish Water have confirmed that procedures have since been revised to ensure the immediate notification of Scottish Water following any pollution incident affecting a watercourse. SEPA has also committed to issuing additional guidance to standby personnel regarding drinking water abstraction points and the circumstances in which Scottish Water should be contacted.

The event has been categorised as major. Scottish Water has identified three actions which DWQR accepts are appropriate and will monitor to ensure they are completed prior to signing off the incident. DWQR made five additional recommendations.

