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Date: 23 April 2010

**NI DWI Information Letter 04/10**

**To: Board Level Contact of Northern Ireland Water Ltd, Asset Management Directorate**

**GUIDANCE ON THE INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED IN INITIAL AND FINAL REPORTS ON WATER QUALITY EVENTS AND OTHER MATTERS – REGULATION 33 (6 AND 7) OF THE WATER SUPPLY (WATER QUALITY) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2009**

Dear George

**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this letter is to provide NI Water with updated guidance on compliance with the provision of information requirements associated with regulation 33(6 and 7) of the 2009 Amendment Regulations.

This letter supersedes NI DWI Information Letter 02/08 sent to NI Water on 10 January 2008 and reflects the new numbering of regulations contained within the Amendment Regulations. In addition, a more comprehensive description of event notifications is provided.

**2. Regulation 33 (6 and 7) Provision of Information - Events**

**2.1 Definitions:**

“The Regulations” mean The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007.

“The Amendment Regulations” mean the Water Supply (Water Quality) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.

**2.2 NI Water shall **notify** the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) of:**

- (a) the occurrence of any event which, by reason of its effect, or likely effect, on the quality or sufficiency of water supplied by it, gives rise, or is likely to give rise, to a significant risk to the health of persons to whom the water is supplied.
- (b) any other matters relating to the supply of water which:-
  - (i) in the **opinion** of NI Water, is of national significance; or
  - (ii) has attracted or, in the **opinion** of NI Water, is likely to attract significant or national publicity; or

- (iii) has caused or, in the **opinion** of NI Water, is likely to cause significant concern to persons to whom water is supplied.

**2.3 Event** - any occurrence, which by its nature is required to be notified under the Regulations. The following occurrences should be notified as events **along with any other occurrence that NI Water considers** may be an event:

- a) any event leading to a significant deterioration in the quality of a raw water source, which impacts, or may impact, the microbiological and/or chemical quality of the associated treated water;
- b) any event leading to a significant deterioration in the quality of the water entering supply;
- c) any event leading to a significant deterioration in the quality of the water at any point within the distribution system;
- d) any event leading to a significant deterioration of the aesthetic quality of the water supplied, resulting in significant consumer concern;
- e) any sudden and unexpected breach of Part III of the Regulations;
- f) any significant risk to the health of consumers which results in the issuing of "Boil your Water" advice;
- g) any situation which results in the issuing of "Do Not Use" advice;
- h) disinfection failure or failure of treatment which impacts, or may impact, on the disinfection process (e.g. elevated turbidity levels) which has not resulted in automatic shutdown of the water treatment works;
- i) any malfunction of the treatment process which has not resulted in automatic shutdown of the water treatment works, adversely affecting the quality of treated water entering supply;
- j) any treated water containing *Cryptosporidium* oocysts or a significant increase in the number of confirmed cases of cryptosporidiosis (or other disease which may be transmitted through drinking water) reported to NI Water by the Public Health Agency as potentially related to drinking water supplies;
- k) any notification made to a district council under regulation 33 of the Amendment Regulations;
- l) any suspected or actual back siphonage into the mains supply; or
- m) any significant publicity or media interest relating to drinking water quality issues that is likely to cause significant concern to persons to whom water is supplied.

**2.4 Events** will be categorised into **Incidents** and **Non-Incidents**.

**Incident** – this is a sub-set of events, including, but not limited to:

- any sudden and unexpected breach of Part III of the Regulations;
- any breach of Part VII of the Regulations (water treatment);
- any significant risk to the health of consumers;
- significant consumer concern about the quality of water supplied; or
- any combination of the above.

**Non Incident** – all other events not classified as Incidents.

### **3. The Notification Process:**

- (a) NI Water should contact the Inspectorate **as soon as it is aware** of a notifiable problem by telephone. For routine notifications, the first point of contact is the SSO Operations, followed by the HSO Operations and then the SO Operations. However, if the event is likely to have significant publicity or media interest; and/or if NI Water is setting up a major incident team, then the "DWI - Emergency Contacts List" should be used.

- (b) No later than **three working days** after NI Water is aware of the notifiable problem, it should e-mail a "3-Day Report" to the Inspectorate at [dwi@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:dwi@doeni.gov.uk).

#### **4. The notification in writing (3-Day Report) shall include:**

- (a) particulars of the event;
- (b) an assessment of the effect, or likely effect, on the quality or sufficiency of water supplied by NI Water;
- (c) an estimate of the population affected and whether particular sensitive water users such as hospitals, schools, food manufacturers, for example, are affected;
- (d) such information as may be available as to the cause, or likely cause, of the event;
- (e) particulars of the action taken or proposed to be taken in relation to the event to inform and protect consumers and to rectify the situation, and an estimate of when supplies are likely to return to normal; and
- (f) a list of persons (other than customers of NI Water) notified of the event or matter, and a copy of any notices issued to consumers and to the press regarding the event.

#### **5. The 20-Day Report:**

Within **20 working days of the date of the event**, or such longer periods as agreed with the Drinking Water Inspectorate, NI Water shall submit a report relating to the event and containing:

- (a) such information as is necessary to supplement the information given in accordance with paragraph 2.2;
- (b) if samples were taken in connection with the event, particulars of the time at which the samples were taken, the places from which the samples were taken and the results of the analysis of the samples;
- (c) a copy of any report or advice provided to NI Water by its medical, scientific or technical advisers, any district council or the Public Health Agency;
- (d) an assessment of the effectiveness of the action taken in respect of the event and of the adequacy of the arrangements for liaison with any district council and the Public Health Agency, Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Water Management Unit (Operations), the emergency services and the public as the case may be;
- (e) a statement of any lessons learned and of any proposals, if any, for further action identified by NI Water as being necessary or desirable in the light of the event; and
- (f) such other information relating to the event or matter that NI Water considers relevant.

#### **6. Drinking Water Safety Plans**

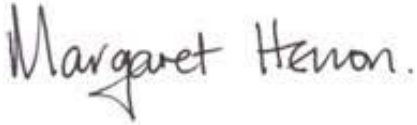
NI DWI Information Letter 03/10 issued on 2 February 2010 provided NI Water with guidance on the review of risk assessments (section 3.3 refers). Following an event, NI Water should ensure a review of any related risk assessments is carried out in accordance with this guidance.

#### **7. Enquiries**

Any enquiries about this letter should be addressed to Margaret Herron (028 9056 9294) or Colin Clements (028 9056 9242).

8. Copies of this letter are being sent to the Director of Water Policy Division, DRD; Director of Environmental Protection (Northern Ireland Environment Agency); the Director of Public Health; Consultants in Health Protection; the Chief Environmental Health Officer (DHSSPS); Chief Environmental Health Officers, District Councils; and Director of Water Regulation, NIAUR.
9. Please acknowledge receipt of this letter, by e-mail to [DWI@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:DWI@doeni.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Herron." The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Margaret Herron  
**Chief Inspector of Drinking Water**  
Drinking Water Inspectorate