

Each County Manager

21st September 2009

Re: Guidance for Local Authorities on developing Drinking Water Safety Plans

Dear County Manager

The EPA Drinking Water Report published earlier this year recommended that local authorities adopt the Water Safety Plan approach in the management of drinking water supplies. This approach stems from the World Health Organisation and sets out a systematic approach that over time should lead to risk reduction, safer water, better targeted resources and reduced costs. The WHO has published guidance on the implementation of the Drinking Water Safety Plan approach (*Drinking Water Safety Plan Manual – Step-by-step risk management for drinking water suppliers*) and this is available for download on the WHO website at:

http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2009/9789241562638_eng_print.pdf

The guidance manual explains clearly how to develop a drinking water safety plan and is applicable to all types and sizes of water supplies no matter how simple or complex.

The EPA contend that the most effective means of consistently ensuring the safety of a drinking water supply is through the use of a comprehensive risk assessment and risk management approach that encompasses all steps in water supply from catchment to consumer. The WHO step by step guidance provides for such an approach. Much of the input to develop the approach may already be available to local authorities from existing activities such as outputs from the Water Framework Directive.

Further specific guidance maybe developed over time on water safety plans but in the interim the WHO guidance manual is recommended by the EPA and should now be progressed in your area.

If you have any questions on the above then please do not hesitate to contact me at the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Gerard O'Leary
Programme Manager
Office of Environmental Enforcement

c.c. Mr. Ivan Grimes (DoEHLG)
Dr. Kevin Kelleher (Health Service Executive)