

I Products and Processes in the Provision of Water Supplies

- **Regulations 25–28 of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 1989 provide for the approval of substances, products and processes used in the provision of public water supplies. Approvals are issued by The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and The National Assembly for Wales (collectively referred to as the Authorities).**
- **The Committee on Products and Processes for Use in Public Water Supply (the Committee) advises the Authorities on approval issues.**

The Committee on Products and Processes

The Committee is an advisory non-departmental public body. It consists of six members including a Chairman, members with expertise in engineering, materials science, toxicology and water treatment. A lay member represents water consumers' interests. The Inspectorate provides technical and administrative support to the Committee.

Following devolution in Scotland, the Committee assumed the status of a jointly established body (JEB). The effect of JEB status is that the Authorities and the Scottish Executive consult over the administration of the Committee, including appointments.

The Statutory Approvals Scheme

The purpose of the approvals scheme is to ensure that chemicals and construction materials do not cause adverse effects on water quality. Products are recommended for approval if they are considered to be unobjectionable on health grounds, in the light of the best available evidence at the time.

Approval is given solely for the purposes of Regulation 25 and does not imply any recommendation as to the technical merits of a product.

Approvals issued in 2002

The Committee met on six occasions in 2002 and 108 applications for approval were considered, including 54 new applications.

The Authorities approved 64 products.

One product was refused approval.

The Authorities also gave approval to the modification of conditions to two currently listed products.

The Secretary of State's list of approved products is posted on the web site address: www.dwi.gov.uk/cpp/index.htm

Customer Satisfaction Survey

During 2002 a survey of customer satisfaction with the regulatory approval scheme was carried out. The survey was conducted via an e-mail questionnaire using a sample of approval holders, applicants and water company staff. The survey revealed a generally high level of satisfaction among the water companies. Applicants and approval holders made a number of supportive comments about the service but remain concerned about the time taken to secure approval. The report of the review and the Inspectorate's response has been posted on the website: www.dwi.gov.uk/cpp/satis.htm

Impact of European Standards

The Secretary of State's list includes those chemicals that are the subject of a European standard and have been published by BSI in its BS:EN series. Specific products made from chemicals that conform to a BS:EN are not listed. These products may be used without the approval of Government Authorities, providing that the national conditions of use are observed. The national conditions of use are also included in the list of approved products.

In respect of construction products used in contact with drinking water, the DG Enterprise Regulatory Group – Construction Products Drinking Water, is developing the European Acceptance Scheme for drinking water construction products. This will lead to the establishment of harmonised arrangements for testing and certification of construction products that are used in contact with drinking water.

In the meantime, the Committee will continue to consider equivalent test results obtained from approval bodies in other countries. However, applicants will need to submit copies of test protocols and test results; test certificates alone will not be accepted.

Information on the approval systems in EU and EFTA countries is available in a report commissioned by the Inspectorate entitled 'European Approval Systems – Effects of Materials on Water Quality' 2nd Edition (ISBN 1 898920 427). Available from WRc Publications Ltd. Tel: 01793 865138.

Designated Laboratories

During 2002 the Committee reviewed the appointments of its test laboratories. LGC (Teddington) Ltd was not re-appointed. The Water Quality Centre was re-appointed and new appointments were made in respect of WRc-NSF, ITS Testing & Certification Ltd and Law Laboratories Ltd. These four laboratories are now designated by the Inspectorate and by the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme to carry out testing of products used in contact with drinking water.

Regulatory Issues in 2002

Audit requirement

The audit requirement introduced via Regulation 25 Letter 6/2001 is being progressively introduced during 2002 and 2003. The frequency and scale of audit testing will be finalised in 2003, when the Committee considers the results of the first round of audit testing.

Change in national condition of use for polyacrylamide flocculants

Regulation 25 Letter 2/2002 gave notice of the intention to impose a stricter purity requirement for the free acrylamide monomer content of polyacrylamide flocculants for water treatment. A notification has been made to the European Commission under the provisions of the Directive 98/34/EC on the notification of new technical requirements. It is anticipated that the requirement, which will reduce the concentration of acrylamide monomer from 0.025% in the product to 0.020%, will come into force on 25th December 2003.