

TGN1 - MEDICAL SURVEILLANCE OF PERSONNEL

Introduction

To maintain safe water supplies, water undertakers must continue to be vigilant and take appropriate steps to minimise ways in which water supplies could become contaminated.

Following the outbreak of typhoid fever in Croydon in 1937, where the source of infection was identified as a typhoid-carrying operative working in a groundwater well, it is now a requirement that all personnel who carry out work in, on or around treated and partially treated drinking water (herein referred to as “restricted operations”) be registered on an approved hygiene scheme and hold a valid water hygiene training card.

Good Practice

1. The training and assessment process for obtaining a water hygiene card requires personnel to declare whether they have ever suffered from any infection that may pose a risk to human health and that may be transmitted through water supplies. These infections include (but are not limited to) the enteric fevers typhoid and paratyphoid, hepatitis A and E, dysentery and verocytotoxin producing *E. coli* (VTEC). The assessment also requires personnel to declare whether they have a history of enteric fever, persistent diarrhoea, vomiting, jaundice or prolonged, unexplained fever.
2. Any personnel who declare such illness or history of illness should be referred for further specialised medical advice.
3. Known carriers of waterborne diseases must not be allowed to work on restricted operations.
4. It is the card holder’s responsibility to report any vomiting, diarrhoea or fever (greater than 72 hours), jaundice or any other illness that may have a bearing on their suitability to work on restricted operations to their line manager immediately. All such personnel should be suspended from carrying out work on restricted operations until cleared to do so.
5. Personnel who have been off sick should be assessed to verify that they are fit to continue their restricted operations duties.
6. Line managers who receive any such reports should seek advice from their company medical advisor.
7. Clearance to return to work on restricted operations should depend on the approval of the medical advisor. All such actions should be appropriately documented.
8. Water undertakers should have procedures in place to ensure that all personnel carrying out restricted operations (including their contractors) comply with the requirements of the approved hygiene scheme.