

The need for a joined up approach to the provision, management, security and delivery of alternative drinking water supplies

Keith Silcock
Water Direct

Earls Colne Business Park, Colchester, CO6 2NS

Category: Acting

Preferred presentation: Oral

Summary of presentation:

When the security or availability of the piped drinking water supply is compromised, an alternative supply of wholesome water is often needed; quickly.

The security and integrity of this alternative drinking water supply is paramount, so managed processes and procedures must be in place in advance of the event to ensure that quality remains wholesome; from its source right through to when the public consumes it. In terms of water quality all methods of alternative supply, when provided as an alternative to the piped network, whether in containers, bottles, tanks or tankers, are an extension of the public water supply. They must all therefore conform to the public water supply regulations at the point of delivery. In a water supply emergency, the last thing the public needs is a substandard or unwholesome alternative.

For speed of response and integrity of supply, adequate and appropriate compatible alternative drinking water assets and resources must be pre-prepared and securely stockpiled in diverse locations. Logistics capability must be in place and immediately available so that delivery to where it is needed can be affected within critical timeframes.

Water Direct is the foremost specialist provider of alternative drinking water supplies in the UK, supporting water companies and their customers with a comprehensive fast response service when the piped supply is unavailable, unusable or inadequate. Over a decade ago we conceived and created the UK's only Bottled Water Bank specifically for emergency use. This unique Bank now reaches nationwide and provides many water companies, public bodies and commercial users with a resilient and auditable supply of readily available stock, which is assured to conform to the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000, as amended, at the time of deployment.

As a preferred method of satisfying the first day's needs of many emergencies, plans are now in place for sustaining supplies of quality assured drinking water in bottles to major escalations and widespread events.

Many lessons have been learned and processes implemented since the summer floods of 2007. There is still room for improvement however and this next stage requires joined up multi-agency discussion and stakeholder commitment so that all involved implement compatible best practices to achieve a common aim.

This paper will share experiences gained in more than a decade of preparedness, security, quality assurance and front line delivery of alternative supplies in all forms, to prompt discussion for establishing optimum solutions.