



CASE-STUDY FOR THE NATIONAL WATER HYGIENE SCHEME (ALSO KNOWN AS THE 'BLUE CARD')

National Water Hygiene is a training programme – with assessment – that delivers the knowledge and behaviours necessary to keep our drinking water safe and clean.

Ten years ago, a leakage detection engineer for RPS attended the very first National Water Hygiene training and accreditation scheme and still carries the 'blue card' today.

Paul Standing, the UK's longest 'blue card' holder said:

"It's important to realise that when you are working with drinking water you are affecting people's lives, so it's imperative you do your job properly. Water is a food stuff and the National Water Hygiene training explains how to treat your tools, pumps and vans in the same way a chef would keep their kitchen work area clean and tidy."

The National Water Hygiene scheme was developed by Energy & Utility Skills in collaboration with all UK water companies and the Drinking Water Inspectorate. The scheme is based on nationally agreed standards and provides individuals working on the water network with the knowledge and behaviours to maintain the highest water hygiene practices.

The scheme replaced water company specific hygiene schemes and removed the need for workers to undergo separate testing and carry cards for each water company. The National Water Hygiene scheme applies to direct employees of water companies, contractors that work on clean water network, including self-lay organisations working on new developments.





The National Water Hygiene scheme is mandated by all regulated UK water companies and is key to ensuring that anyone working in contact with the public water supply, think carefully about hygiene, managing risk and understand best practice.

The e-Learning programme comprises nine modules including water as food and a carrier of disease, contamination, its consequences, and how to prevent it. Once completed the individual takes an assessment which is marked automatically – with results communicated to themselves and the employer administrator.

After passing the assessment, individuals are issued with a photo ID card detailing the date of training (known as the 'blue card') and registered on EUSR – a register of training and skills for the UK's energy and utilities sector, which can be checked online, 24/7, by those who control access to operational sites and the water network.

The Deputy Chief Inspector of the Drinking Water Inspectorate (England and Wales) comments:

“The Drinking Water Inspectorate welcomes this Scheme, which covers a core competency for all those involved in the provision of water supply to the consumer’s tap. Participation in the Scheme helps promote high standards of hygiene and safety, ensuring that drinking water remains clean and safe, and that consumers are protected.

The National Water Hygiene Scheme is founded on the best practice enshrined in the water industry’s Principles of Water Supply Hygiene. It provides personnel in the sector with knowledge and awareness of the public health implications of their roles and enables water companies and contractors working on water supply systems to demonstrate their commitment to the promotion of a public health culture in delivery of routine activities.”

RPS were one of the first organisations to realise the benefits of the 'blue card':

“As a service provider to all of the major water companies, the National Water Hygiene 'blue card' enables us, to fulfil our hygiene and safety requirements. The 'blue card' reassures our clients that all of our staff are trained to a competent level when it comes to safe and hygienic working practices and are encouraged to work to standards at all times whilst working on the network.”

[Watch the National Water Hygiene awareness video here.](#)

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