

## Case Study – Borehole Cross-Connection

Homeowners in a Staffordshire village called in their local water company after they started to notice their drinking water had a funny taste and was appearing discoloured.

The water company's Distribution Technicians were despatched and worked with the company's Water Quality staff to investigate the problem and determine the cause.

It soon transpired the problem only started after a local haulage company had sunk a new borehole to wash their vehicles. Having experienced similar problems several years earlier, the team knew they needed the Water Regulations Technicians to carry out an immediate inspection of the site to identify potential causes.

The Water Regulations Technicians soon identified the cause of the problem. It turned out to be a direct cross-connection between the new borehole and the incoming drinking water mains.

This was immediately disconnected and as a precautionary measure 17 local properties were issued with 'Do Not Drink' notices, until the water company had completed its investigations and were sure the water supply was safe to drink.

Because of similar cases in the past, the water company was keen to identify and prosecute the groundwork company responsible for the installation as previous attempts to educate local well drillers had failed and offers to talk to the Well Drillers Association came to nothing.

The owner of the well drilling company who installed the borehole claimed that the cross connection was caused through a breakdown in communications between himself and his employee installing it.

The case was put before Sheffield magistrates on 18 September 2012 and the installation company was found guilty of two breaches of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 [Regulation 3 (2) (i) and Regulation 7 (1) (a)]. They were fined a total of £15,102.40, including costs.

Since this court case the Well Drillers Association have contacted the water company and have arranged for members of the Water Regulations team to attend their next meeting to educate their members on the Water Fittings Regulations.

Before – borehole cross-connected to the drinking water supply



After – temporary disconnection of pipework

