

Drinking Water Regulations and Validation Requirements

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The Environmental Protection Agency guidelines, "A Handbook on Implementation for Sanitary Authorities", in relation to the Drinking Water Regulations, 2000 (S.I. 439 of 2000)¹. These guidelines state that laboratories can satisfy the requirements of the legislation and the section of the guidelines dealing with "Performance of Analytical Methods and Analytical Quality Control" for particular parameters if they have gained accreditation to ISO 17025 from INAB. The guidelines contain specific criteria for carrying out validations. The question arises: Do laboratories that are already accredited have to re-validate using the criteria given in the handbook?

INAB's position regarding these guidelines is:

- It is expected that accredited laboratories' validation data is equivalent to the requirements in the guidelines.
- Laboratories that have been in the system for a long time may have to revisit validation to confirm consistency with more recent performance requirements. A gap analysis would prove useful in this situation and the laboratory could collate information from historical quality control data. External quality assurance data may also be beneficial in this regard. This is not a prescriptive approach but it is expected that assessors will assess this on a case by case basis. Some assessors will have already examined this area as they visited laboratories.
- INAB policy statement PS12 requires laboratories working in areas regulated by legislation to proactively discuss with their customers any legislative or other requirements that may have an impact on how the service has to be carried out. The laboratory should make it transparent to the customer the extent to which the laboratory can meet the needs of the customer in this respect.

Please note that S.I. 439 of 2000 has been revoked with the publication of the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 106 of 2007) but the testing requirements and parameters have not changed and the EPA guidelines are still relevant.

* Available for download at <http://www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/water/drinking/>