Guidelines for Potable (Drinking) Water Transport in Victoria

Consumers who purchase potable water from a water carter need assurance that the water they purchase is safe for drinking.

These guidelines have been developed to assist carters of potable water in Victoria meet their legal obligations under the Victorian *Food Act 1984* , to ensure the water they deliver to their customers is both safe and suitable, and to provide assurance to their customers.

Legal Obligations

A person who sells and transports potable water has both a legal obligation and a duty of care to ensure that water is protected from contamination during loading, transportation and delivery.

A water transport vehicle is defined as a food transport vehicle under the *Food Act 1984* but is not required to be registered with the local Council. However a Council Environmental Health Officer has the right to inspect the vehicle at any time, take a water sample, and demand evidence that the water is both safe and suitable.

Apart from any civil action arising from the sale of unsafe water there are substantial penalties under the *Food Act 1984* of up to $40,000 for an individual and $200,000 for a corporation. However there are things that you can do to protect your customers and ensure that you comply with your legal and civil obligations.

Water Supply

Potable water is defined under the *Food Act 1984* as a food and means water that is safe for human consumption, food preparation and ice-making.

You need to ensure that the potable water you source is obtained from a supply or supply point approved by a Victorian water authority.

If there is doubt about the quality of the water source or the water to be transported and delivered to the customer, then the advice of the water authority must be sought.

Water for drinking must never be taken directly from a source other than approved supply or supply point.

Tanker\Water Transport Vehicle

The water transport business or the person transporting the water is responsible for ensuring the following:

- Tanker / water transport vehicles must be suitable for transporting water so the vehicle does not contaminate the water. The tank and system used to transfer the water from the vehicle to the customers container must be fitted with appropriate backflow prevention mechanisms to protect against contamination or cross-contamination.

- The Tanker / water transport vehicle should have signs installed on each side and rear of the container that reads 'Drinking Water' in letters at least 100 mm high.

The Tanker / water transport vehicles must also kept clean and clear of any possible contaminants prior to sourcing the potable water to be delivered, with all walls, openings, lids or seals intact to protect from possible contamination.

The water containers / tanks must be regularly cleaned, depending on the frequency of use, but at a minimum at least every three months, by:

- Physically cleaning and flushing; and
- Filling for at least 30 minutes with water containing at least 5 mg per litre free chlorine *.

Note that there may be occupational health and safety requirements if there is any entry into a water container or tank (see the Code of Practice for Confined Spaces).

Tanker / water transport vehicles and fittings used to cart potable water should not be used for carting reclaimed water, toxic or hazardous chemicals, non-food liquids, and human or animal wastes. Vehicles used to cart consumable liquids for example: unpasteurised milk, should be subject to a thorough and appropriate cleaning process before transporting potable water.

Pipes and Fittings

All fittings must be cleaned monthly in a solution containing at least 5 mg per litre of free chlorine*.

All pipes and equipment must be secured and stored in such a way as to prevent contamination during transit and delivery.

Verification

To satisfy the legal requirements and your civil responsibilities each tanker / water transport vehicle must carry a logbook, which must be retained for at least 12 months and provided to health authorities on request. The logbook must contain the following information for each consignment:

- Transport date, time, driver and company;
- Location of water source;
- Delivery address;
- Amount delivered; and
- Any comments relating to the shipment.

The customer invoice must state that the water delivered is potable and safe for human consumption.

The log book should also contain details of the cleaning regime and any chemicals used.

The operators of Tanker / water transport vehicles must also comply with any local council requirements.

Cleaning Mixtures

* To achieve **a free chlorine residual of** 5 mg / L for each 1000 litres of water the following mixtures are required:

Chlorine source	Amount to add to 1000L of water
12.5% available chlorine	40 ml or 40g
65% available chlorine	8g

You can get chlorine in the following products. **Check** label on container for concentration and use.

- Liquid swimming pool or dairy factory chlorine (sodium hypochlorite) - 12.5% approximately;
- Granular pool chlorine (calcium hypochlorite) - 65% approximately.