



CATG WATER SAMPLING GUIDE

2026 V10

Introduction and scope – new DWI scheme manual V4 now

The water sampler certification scheme has been set up to provide a framework to ensure the Certification of Persons Scheme for sampling private water supplies in accordance with The Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 (as amended), and The Private Water Supplies (Wales) Regulations 2017 and DWI requirements.

This states that a local authority or a contractor must ensure that each sample is:

- Taken by a person able to demonstrate compliance with any of EN ISO/IEC 17024, EN ISO/EIC 17025, or another equivalent standard accepted at international level**
- Representative of the water at the sampling point at the time of sampling**
- Not contaminated in the course of being taken**
- Kept at such a temperature and in such condition as will secure that there is no material change in what is to be measured, and**
- Analyzed without delay by a competent person using suitable equipment within 24 hours at the receiving laboratory, unless the specified method states otherwise**

The private water sampler must ensure that all samples are analyzed using a system of analytical quality control that meets the requirements of the sampling laboratory.

This guide sets out what a candidate must meet to be certified as a competent person to sample private water supplies.

How our scheme works

The scheme is based over a six-year/72-month certification cycle, and this requires the water sampler to:

- Undergo training**
- Take a multiple-choice and practical water sampling examination**
- Complete a surveillance audit every 18 months after the examination**
- Complete a re-certification examination after 72 months**

The training

To be successful for the examination and the water sampling assessments a water sampler needs to:

- Have a basic level of numeracy and literacy, and this shall be demonstrated as part of the assessment process**
- Identify the correct sampling equipment to use**
- Use the correct forms**
- Identify and use appropriate personal protection equipment (PPE)**
- Identify and manage the hazards to personal safety**
- Identify the nature and scope of water supply and identify the relevant persons to the supply and work with them**
- Effectively explain the purpose of the sampling visit to consumers, building owners, tenants and property managers**
- Take samples correctly in accordance with the scheme and testing laboratory's correct procedures**
- Ensure that all field equipment is maintained and calibrated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions**
- Label and store sample bottles and complete accompanying paperwork correctly**
- Ensure the transporting vehicle is clean, safe and hygiene is maintained, and all equipment calibrated**

This can be developed through your experience, on-site training and/or through approved off-the-job training workshops.

Any training provider you use must be acceptable to the DWI. CATG are an approved trainer.

The main examination

The main examination consists of a 25-question multiple-choice examination and 3 practical water sampling assessments.

You will need proof of your identity – driving license, local authority employee card, photographic pass, or passport.

The multiple-choice examination

The multiple-choice examination will normally take place before the practical water sampling assessment and consists of 25 multiple-choice questions taken from each of the components of the syllabus issued by scheme owner, the DWI.

Each question addresses a required learning outcome and requires a correct multiple-choice answer. A maximum of two marks are awarded for each question.

For a successful pass, a mark of 80% or greater is required.

The examiner will provide a candidate with an interim mark after the examination and that will be reviewed and confirmed by CATG's certification panel.

If a candidate is unsuccessful, they can re-sit the examination. They may be allowed to take the practical water sampling assessment before the re-examination

The practical water sampling assessment

The practical examination forms part of the main examination. This will involve sampling for three different parameters, plumbing metals, one chemical and one microbiological. There are 10 marks for each water sampling.

The candidate will need their water sampling:

Work wear or coveralls

PPE to include suitable hand and eye protections

Local manual previously supplied to CATG for reviewing

Cool box

Thermometer or datalogger

Ice packs (do not need to be frozen)

Sealed and labelled water sample bottles for one plumbing metals, one chemical and one microbiological water sample

Tap cleaning equipment to include the chlorine application bottle and alcohol wipes

If not, possible or available you can use CATG equipment.

This assessment consists of the examiner observing to what extent the candidate follows the procedures in the DWI manual, their local manual and the bottle guide from their UKAS accredited laboratory and completes the associated paperwork correctly.

The examiner will provide the candidate with an interim mark after the examination and that will be reviewed and confirmed by CATG's certification panel. A successful pass of the practical part of the exam shall be considered to be a mark of 80% or greater.

If a candidate is unsuccessful, they can re-take the practical water sampling assessment.

A water samplers' competence

CATG's certification panel will make the decision on whether competency has been achieved.

Competence is considered to be:

**The successful completion of the training and successfully passing the multiple-choice examination, and
Applying the skills and knowledge to achieve the intended results through the practical water sampling assessments**

If a candidate is successful, they will be awarded with a certificate of competence by CATG.

National registration scheme

When a candidate has successfully completed their multiple-choice examination and practical water sampling assessments and received their certificate, they will need to register with CATG for a national registration water sampling card.

This card provides proof that the water sampler is deemed competent.

Surveillance audits

Every 18 months a surveillance audit is required.

This audit will include scrutiny of the local sampling manual, as well as a candidate's compliance with the procedures contained within the local sampling manual.

At least 2 weeks' notice period shall normally be given by CATG of any audit, but we reserve the right to audit unannounced where it deems appropriate. The audit will include, but not be limited to reviewing the following:

Competence checks on the individual water sampler

Checks on paperwork associated with the scheme

Training undertaken in the last 18 months by the certified individual water sampler

Necessary equipment for the job

Water samples being labelled, transported and stored appropriately

The individual water sampler has a copy of the required manuals and procedures and are they in date

Planning of water samples

Building owners, consumers and/or tenants are greeted in a professional manner and kept informed through the water sample

The water sampler is collecting a particular suite of parameters in the correct order

General hygienic conditions of the individual certified water samplers' kit and carrier are met

Disinfectant sprays or wipes within date

Sample bottles stored in the certified individual sampler's vehicle are in date and robust

What temperature checks are carried out when water samples are in transit and the storage temperature is within an appropriate range

The certified individual water sampler uses a cool box, what state is it in and how is an appropriate temperature maintained

If no cool box or fridge is in use, how are samples transported and in what conditions

What are the transport arrangements and handover to the laboratory or drop off point

Where does the certified individual water sampler place the bottles and kit during sampling – is it hygienically acceptable

How does the certified individual water sampler record and report anomalies and concerns that may affect the result, or public health

The audit report will recommend areas for improvement, commend areas of good practice and give an overall mark of satisfactory, generally satisfactory (a few minor recommendations) or unsatisfactory (numerous infringements or fewer, serious ones).

Certification will be suspended or withdrawn in the case of an unsatisfactory audit.

It is noted that some parts of the audit may not fall under the responsibility of the water sampler e.g. sample storage facilities, and recommendations may be made to the water sampler's employer to improve facilities.

Re-certification audit

After 6-years/72 months, a re-certification audit is required. The re-certification audit will include:

A multiple-choice examination Practical water sampling examination

The multiple-choice examination will normally take place before the practical water sampling assessment.

The multiple-choice examination consists of 25 questions, from each of the components of the syllabus issued by the DWI. For a successful pass, a mark of 80% or greater is required.

The practical examination will involve sampling for three different parameters, plumbing metals, one chemical and one microbiological.

There are 10 marks for sampling of each parameter. A successful pass of the practical part of the exam shall be considered to be a mark of 80% or greater.

The examiner will provide a candidate with an interim mark after the examination and that will be reviewed and confirmed by CATG's certification panel. CATG's certification panel will make the decision on whether competency has been achieved.

If a candidate is successful and passes their multiple-choice examination and practical, they will be awarded a new certificate of competence and a new national registration card.

Leaving the scheme

A certified individual water sampler can leave the scheme at any time. They must return their certificate of competence and national registration card to CATG. They will be removed from the national database and CATG will inform the DWI.

Changing employer

A certified individual water sampler can change employer at any time but we ask them to inform CATG so we can maintain up-to-date records of their water sampling certification.

Withdrawal and suspension from the scheme

If certified individual water samplers are found to have acted in a manner contrary to the certification requirements they will be withdrawn until a successful examination and on-site audit is achieved.

Withdrawal of certification would be due to, but not limited to:

- A loss of water sample integrity**
- Falsification of sample paperwork or records**
- Wilful contamination of samples**

Suspension of certification would be due to, but not limited to:

Issues of training or competence
An unsatisfactory audit
Failure to pass an examination

Where certification is withdrawn or suspended, CATG will be required to identify the extent of the actions and assist in its resolution e.g. by contacting affected parties, water sampler etc.

In the case of withdrawal of certification, CATG will remove the certification records from their system and formally notify the scheme owner, currently the DWI.

In the case of suspension, CATG will amend their online records to record that the individual is suspended, with the date that the suspension commenced.

CATG will decide whether withdrawal or suspension is appropriate. It is intended that withdrawal shall be used where there is a need for re-certification, and suspension used where it is expected that an investigation may not lead to corrective actions.

A suspended certification may be subsequently changed to a withdrawn certification by CATG as it sees fit to do so.

Appeals or complaint

If a candidate feels their examination or on-site audit has not been run fairly or they are unhappy with their result or our service, they can appeal to:

CATG's Governing Body:
29a Princes Crescent
Morecambe
Lancashire
LA4 6BY

Full details are on our website www.catg.co.uk.