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Shared Services
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Specialist Estates Services

Specialist Estates Services Notification 18/10

17 December 2018

For action by:

Board Level Directors (Fire), NHS Health Boards and Trusts

For information only:

Chief Executives
Estates/Facilities Directors and Managers
Fire Safety Managers
Fire Advisors

Copy to: Head of Capital, Estates and Facilities, Department of Health and Social Care, Welsh Government

Attached documents: N/A

Dear Colleague

DEFECTIVE FIRE HYDRANTS

Introduction

Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) across the country have been issued with a critical safety alert regarding potential failure of fire hydrant mouthpieces.

The hydrants in question are the Series 19 hydrant type supplied by Aqua Gas and installed circa 1996 - 2006.

Due to the risk posed, where such hydrants are discovered, FRS staff have been instructed that this type of hydrant is not to be used even in the case of an emergency.

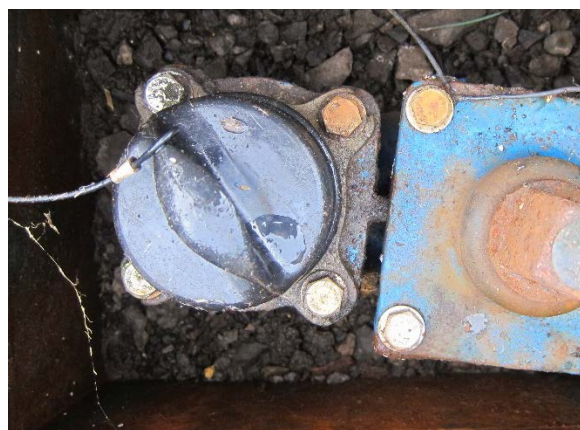
Background

Across England and Wales there have been 3 reported injuries to Fire Service personnel during fire-fighting activities, when the Series 19 mouthpiece of the hydrant has become detached from the main body whilst under pressure.

The Series 19 mouthpiece can be identified by its single retaining pin at the point at which the stand pipe is attached, whereas the standard hydrant mouthpiece is retained by four bolts:



Aqua gas Series 19 with single retaining pin



Standard hydrant mouthpiece secured with four bolts.

For public hydrants, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) along with the Fire Service are currently undertaking a replacement project to remove all such hydrants. However, this replacement programme does not extend to private hydrants such as those typically found on many NHS premises.

Not only do these defective hydrants pose a risk to FRS personnel but also to NHS maintenance staff or contracted service agents undertaking periodic testing. Furthermore, the effectiveness of operational fire-fighting could be hampered by the lack of available fire-fighting water.

Action

- Survey existing hydrant systems to establish the presence of Aqua Gas Series 19 mouth pieces with single retaining pins.

Where identified, the following actions should be implemented:

- Inform the respective Fire and Rescue Service of the sites and locations and establish whether an increase water bowsers attendance is required for fire-fighting activity.
- Before replacement is undertaken it will be necessary to clarify ownership of the defective hydrants.
- An expedited programme to replace the defective hydrants should be implemented.
- The site/building fire risk assessment should be updated to reflect the fire hydrant provisions.
- Where Series 19 hydrants are identified, planned maintenance and testing should be suspended, however all other hydrants should continue to be tested and maintained as necessary.

Any enquiries on the content of this letter should be addressed to Anthony Pitcher, Senior Fire Safety Advisor on 02920 904120 or e-mail anthony.pitcher@wales.nhs.uk

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "NH Davies". The letters are cursive and fluidly connected.

NH Davies BSc (Hons), Dip Proj Man (RICS), MBA, MCIQB, FIHEEM

Director Specialist Estates Services

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