



PQ Number: 26788/22

Question: To ask the Minister for Health the risk posed by an asbestos water tank.

- Thomas Gould

Dear Deputy Gould,

In response to the question posed what are the risks posed by an asbestos water tank please be advised of the following:

There is no reference to asbestos either in the current Drinking Water legislation (Directive 98/93 as amended) or in the new recast Drinking Water Directive - 2020/2184, which comes into effect from 12th January 2023.

The WHO has not established a guideline value for asbestos, it has stated that there is no consistent evidence that ingested asbestos is hazardous to health. Assessment date 1993 Principal reference WHO (2003) Asbestos in drinking-water.

“There is little convincing evidence of the carcinogenicity of ingested asbestos in epidemiological studies of populations with drinking-water supplies containing high concentrations of asbestos. Moreover, in extensive studies in experimental animal species, asbestos has not consistently increased the incidence of tumours of the gastrointestinal tract.

There is therefore no consistent evidence that ingested asbestos is hazardous to health, and thus it is concluded that there is no need to establish a health-based guideline value for asbestos in drinking-water”. (WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality 4th Edition 2011 incorporating 1st Addendum (updated 2017) is therefore referenced in this regard.)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Deirdre Lavin'.

Deirdre Lavin

Regional Chief Environmental Health Officer

Dublin Mid-Leinster