

[Redaction]  
/SHASM/DOH/GB

10/03/09 09:54 AM

To [Redaction]

cc [Redaction] Mark Prunty/SHASM/DOH/GB@DOH

Subject Re: Fw: Tap Water<sup>(1)</sup>  
ct

[Redaction]- Does not tap water mitigate some of the effects of drunkenness? by (a) reducing dehydration effects of alcohol (b) the body can only take in so much liquid, so indirectly this reduces alcohol intake (c) drunkenness can be seen as alcohol intake over a period of time, as the body processes each unit of alcohol in an hour, so for a longer session of drinking intake of water would have some mitigating effect. It is not mitigating current drunkenness so much as slowing the process of getting drunk/preventing this. This said, I will consider further what you say.

Also, I want to come back to the question of soft drinks - you thought it had gone away. From the meeting in the Hague last week, I heard about the German 'apple juice law' that says there must always be a soft drink on sale cheaper than the cheapest alcoholic drink. Swiss law says there must always be a choice of 3 such soft drinks. So it is possible to do. I plan to e-mail my German contact to get details. I am not sure this provision will survive into the code, but we need to ensure we give Ministers the full information.

[Redaction]

[Redacted]

10/03/2009 09:40

To [Redaction]

cc Mark Prunty/SHASM/DOH/GB@DOH, [Redactions]

Subject Fw: Tap Water  
ct

[Redaction],

A further comment on the mandatory code. At the moment we have:

Objective 3 - To ensure customers have the opportunity to mitigate the intoxicating effects of alcohol whilst out drinking.

6) free tap water must be provided on request to customers of those premises that have a premises license or a club premises certificate allowing them to sell alcohol for consumption on those premises.

The way Objective 3 is worded is potentially misleading because tap water does not strictly mitigate alcohol intoxication, i.e. make the person less drunk.

I think the structure of the Code needs a slight overhaul. I would suggest deleting Objective 3 altogether and rewording Objective 2 as follows:

**Objective 2: "To ensure customers have a genuine, informed choice about the amount of alcohol they consume"**

And that the following measures sit under Objective 2:

- Unit information at point of sale (currently under Objective 1 which concerns irresponsible promotions)
- Choice of small glass sizes (is already under Objective 2)
- Free tap water (is currently under Objective 3 and is potentially misleading)

Mark - the document contains only draft regulations, regimented by high-level objectives showing the rationale. It won't contain discussion on the safety issues connected with water, but this this could be covered in the accompanying guidance and in staff training around the Code.

[Redaction]

Senior Policy Officer  
Alcohol Programme

[redaction]

----- Forwarded by [Redaction] on 10/03/09 09:28 AM -----

**Mark**

**Prunty/SHASM/DOH/  
GB**

10/03/09 08:01 AM

To Redaction

cc Redactions

Subject Re: Tap Water

Thanks [redaction] . You are correct that this is potentially misleading.

I thought we advised on water OR soft drinks (the latter more palatable for most people whan not eating)? The purpose in this context was mainly to spend less overall time drinking alcohol.

The anti-dehydration effect is a bonus.

If there is a lack of free tap water that is causing a problem, this makes sense I suppose but I guess cheap soft drinks might have more impact but not practical for this kind of memorandum.

My only worry is whether we need to take any account of the recent advice on drinking water with Ecstasy use in the ACMD report. This gives recommendations on use of E and water/soft drinks.

Even if we do not need to address this here, we should be aware that over-use of water can kill in some club scenes (very rarely) and may beed to consider our joined-upness in background.

Not had time to look carefully yet.

What is the deadline?

Ta Mark

Message sent from a Blackberry handheld device.

**From:** [redaction]      **Sent:** 09/03/2009 15:58 GMT  
**To:** Mark Prunty  
**Cc:** [redaction]  
**Subject:** Tap Water

Mark,

The draft Mandatory Code contains a requirement for all premises to provide free tap water.

The rationale is "to ensure customers have the opportunity to mitigate the intoxicating effects of alcohol whilst out drinking".

Do you think this form of words is sufficiently accurate?

To confirm my own understanding (which I hope is correct), I think that:

- Water does not make people less drunk per se.
- However you might drink less alcohol if you are alternating water with alcoholic drinks.
- Drinking water makes you less dehydrated, meaning you will feel better the next day.

For this reason, our advice to binge drinkers (e.g in Home Office binge drinking leaflet) includes the following tips:

- drink water regularly and before you go to bed after a night out
- alternate alcoholic drinks with soft drinks or water

I think the crucial point point is whether you think the code wording above implies water makes you less drunk, and whether that's misleading. If this is the case, could you suggest an alternative form of words?

Thanks Mark,

[Redaction]  
Senior Policy Officer  
Alcohol Programme