



**Northwestern
Health Unit**

www.nwhu.on.ca

July 4, 2014

Glenn Treftlin
Clerk
Town of Fort Frances
320 Portage Ave.
Fort Frances, ON P9A 3M5



210 First Street North
Kenora, ON P9N 2K4

Dear Municipal Water Operator/Owner:

Re: Boil Water Advisory Procedure for Municipal Water Systems

This letter is an update regarding the issuing and rescinding of a municipal boil water advisory in an effort to make the process straightforward and consistent with all municipal water operators within the Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) area.

The duty to immediately report to the medical officer of health (MOH) when a large municipal residential water system has adverse water results or there are circumstances when the water quality cannot be guaranteed is found in Schedule 16 of Ontario Regulation 170/03, Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002. Schedule 16 also requires that a written report be given following the immediate phone report. The phone report to the MOH is made by calling and speaking to the public health inspector (PHI) that is assigned to your system, or any PHI listed below if you are unable to reach the first one you call. If your report is after hours (between 4:30 pm and 8:30 am or on weekends) you will speak to the on-call PHI who is reached at our after-hours phone number – 1-866-475-6505.

Schedule 17 of O. Reg. 170/03 specifies that the corrective action to be taken includes such steps as are directed by the MOH. The PHI you talk to is acting on behalf of the MOH and will need to know the location of the impacted area within the municipality, the number of residents/businesses impacted and the details of any high risk premises such as child care centres, hospitals or long term care facilities located within the impacted area.

In most circumstances the report and conversation with the PHI results in a decision to issue a boil water advisory (BWA). The BWA is issued by the municipality using the template provided by the NWHU and the municipality notifies all impacted users. The BWA must be emailed to the PHI you speak to or faxed to 1-807-468-3914 to meet the Schedule 16 requirement for a written report.

In most cases the number of impacted water users is small and door-to-door delivery of the BWA is preferred. Occasionally the BWA affects a large number of users and the local media outlets are often the best way to quickly and effectively communicate to your impacted customers. A media release notifying water users of a BWA should indicate that the municipality has issued a BWA in consultation with the Northwestern Health Unit.

We are providing a BWA template document that needs to be completed by inserting your municipal letterhead and/or logo. This template includes prevention information for the users who receive it from the municipality and we request that you discard any previous templates that you have been using in favour of this new one.

We have also attached a pdf factsheet that can be printed (2-sided) and attached to the BWA that is hand delivered to your water customers. The same information can be found on the NWHU website and your customers should be advised of this if the communication of your BWA is via a media release.

Clear water samples must be secured and results provided to the NWHU prior to rescinding the BWA. A template for a BWA Rescind is also attached and once completed it is emailed or faxed to the health unit and provided to the impacted users in the same manner as the BWA.

Please note that there is the potential that a municipal water system can be contaminated with something that poses a risk to human health and cannot be removed or inactivated by boiling the water. In this case a BWA would not be appropriate and the public health inspector will require the municipal water operator to issue a Drinking Water Advisory (DWA) to not drink or use the water. A DWA would only be required when there is evidence of a potential or real and significant public health risk from the contaminant and every effort would be made to minimize the risk without unnecessarily disrupting the use of the water supply. The circumstances when a DWA should be considered instead of a BWA would include a total loss of pressure in water lines that run in soil that may be chemically contaminated or the occurrence of a catastrophic event such as an accident or a deliberate action that causes massive contamination of the drinking water supply.

Please address any questions to the Public Health Inspector responsible for your municipal water system as listed below.

Brian Norris (274-9827) – Fort Frances, Chapple, Emo, Rainy River
David Coats (274-9827) - Fort Frances, Atikokan
Rick Pascoe (223-3301) – Dryden, Red Lake, Ear Falls, Balmertown/Cochénour, Madsen
Mike Mackie (223-3301) - Dryden, Sioux Lookout, Hudson, Pickle Lake
Dan Harasymiw (223-3301) – Dryden, Vermilion Bay, Ignace
Thomas Nabb (468-3147) – Kenora
Kurt Casey (468-3147) – Kenora
Stephanie Snow (468-3147) – Kenora

The templates referred to in this letter and attached as hard copy will also be sent in electronic form via email to your office so that you and your staff are able to utilize them in the manner outlined. Thank you for your partnership and your work as operators to ensure that your customers have safe water in your municipality.

Sincerely,



Jennifer McKibbin
Manager, Environmental Health and Smoke-Free Ontario

Attachments

c: Dr. Kit Young Hoon, Medical Officer of Health
Mark Perrault, Chief Executive Officer
Arnold Laine, Supervisor, Safe Drinking Water Branch, Ministry of the Environment
Public Health Inspectors

Municipal Letterhead

Dated: *insert date*

To all persons consuming water from the
Name of Municipality
Water Distribution System
from the following locations:

- *List the locations within Municipality*

BOIL WATER ADVISORY

Due to repairs/upgrades the safety of the drinking water **cannot** be guaranteed.

All water from taps should be boiled for at least one minute if it is used for human consumption.

Boiling removes harmful bacteria in the water that may cause illness. Once boiled the water can be stored in the refrigerator in a clean food-safe container and should be used for other activities where it may be ingested, including:

1. brushing teeth or soaking false teeth
2. washing fruits and vegetables
3. adding to uncooked food or drink
4. ice cubes

This advisory shall remain in effect until a notice of rescind is issued.

For more information regarding this Advisory contact: *name and phone number of municipal contact*

For information regarding how to care for your family or continue running your business during a Boil Water Advisory, contact a Public Health Inspector at your local Northwestern Health Unit:

Kenora:
807-468-3147
1-800-830-5978

Dryden:
807-223-3301
1-888-404-4231

Fort Frances:
807-274-9827
1-800-461-3348

Municipal Letterhead

Dated: *insert date*

To all persons consuming water from the
Name of Municipality
Water Distribution System
from the following locations:

- *List the locations within Municipality*

**THE BOIL WATER ADVISORY FOR
THE ABOVE LISTED LOCATIONS
IS HEREBY RESCINDED.**

Laboratory testing of the water supply does not indicate the presence of bacteria.