

SAFE DRINKING WATER - YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Audio
<p>NARRATOR (VOICE OVER)</p> <p>The Canadian Federal Government has or shares the responsibility for ensuring the safety of drinking water in a variety of facilities and locations.</p> <p>For example, in government research facilities...</p>
<p>...aboard our coast guard ships...</p>
<p>...in overseas embassies and consulates...</p>
<p>...federal correctional facilities...</p>
<p>...border crossing facilities...</p>
<p>...on Canadian Forces Bases, installations or deployed operations...</p>
<p>...and in First Nations' communities, where the Government of Canada supports First Nations in delivering safe drinking water to their members.</p>
<p>Many of these facilities are in remote locations. This can present challenges in managing the water system.</p>
<p>VÉRONIQUE MORISSET</p> <p>The Government of Canada plays several roles in ensuring the safety of drinking water, this includes working with the provinces and territories to develop the guidelines for Canadian drinking water quality.</p>
<p>These health-based guidelines are used by all jurisdictions in Canada to ensure the safety of drinking water and to establish the regulatory requirements. This includes regulatory requirements in areas of Federal jurisdiction.</p> <p>Safety of drinking water is important to the life and health of every Canadian, everyday. It's Important for Federal departments to not become complacent about the quality of their drinking water.</p>

<p>You are responsible for ensuring that the water you provide meets the guidelines for Canadian drinking water quality. This is done by testing your water to the guidelines and making sure that your treatment and disinfection work properly.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">NARRATOR</p> <p>The impact on public health from contaminants in water can range from mild to severe.</p>
<p>Microbiological contamination can have an immediate impact, whereas chemical contamination is more of a long-term concern.</p>
<p>Recent examples of microbiological contamination include the tragic events in Walkerton and North Battleford.</p>
<p>These cases of drinking water contamination illustrate the need to be diligent when operating a water supply system to ensure the safety of the drinking water.</p>
<p>Water systems can serve large communities...</p>
<p>...or provide drinking water to just a few people.</p> <p>Every water system has its risks, level of potential impact, and degree of oversight.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">LYSANE BOLDUC</p> <p>Regardless of the size of the system, whether it's large or small, the importance of delivering safe drinking water to end users remains the same. Challenges may be different but the end result must be the same.</p>
<p>In small systems whether they are remote or they are close to urban centres...</p>
<p>challenges are often associated with resources and the availability of resources, whether they are human or otherwise.</p>
<p>Operators are often not working fulltime, so therefore the systems do not get the fulltime attention that a large facility would get with a fulltime operator.</p>
<p>Operating a water system whether small or large is a big responsibility...</p>

...and people involved with the management of the system should receive the appropriate training and should be supported in taking the required training. Asking for help is also something that people should consider when there are gaps in their knowledge areas.

NARRATOR

The Federal Government has a range of responsibilities regarding the provision of safe drinking water.

In the case of employees at federal facilities, the Canada Labour code requires the employer to provide safe water for drinking, personal washing, and food preparation. Water for these uses is also called potable water.

And there are other legislative responsibilities and policies related to water supply systems.

People involved in the operation of a water system need to be familiar with the legislation.

Specifically, the Canada Labour Code, The National Plumbing Code, and applicable Provincial and local requirements.

VÉRONIQUE MORISSET

A number of programs and documents exist to help Federal departments carry out their responsibilities for drinking water quality.

This includes the guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality and their guideline technical documents as well as the document “guidance for providing safe drinking water in areas of Federal jurisdiction”.

NARRATOR

The operation of any water system requires due diligence. This means taking every reasonable precaution to avoid harm or loss.

The best approach for protecting water quality is a “multi-barrier” approach.

This is where a system employs treatment barriers to contamination, and contains multiple checks and routine process evaluations, such as regular water quality reviews.

It begins by making sure you know your water supply system: from the source, to the tap.

Your multi-barrier approach must include regular training, such as that available from water quality training organizations.

Ongoing training ensures you keep on top of the latest guidelines and updates related to equipment and processes.

And there are other trained water quality specialists you can ask for help.

For water system operators and managers, an important resource is the self-study program developed by the federal “Interdepartmental Water Quality Training Board”.

This includes an introductory-level e-learning course and a series of shorter stand-alone modules on a variety of topics.

KEITH SMITH

In the operation of your job, there really are three things you need to know:

- Your obligation when dealing with the water drinking system,
- The training you require to do your job as efficiently as possible,
- and you need to know that you can reach out to a number of different people when and if you have any problems.

NARRATOR

Your ability to provide safe drinking water is directly related to the training you and your team receive.

Make the effort! Because there are people counting on you to keep them healthy, and to keep them safe.