

## SAFE WATER IN YOUR SCHOOL

Safe water is an essential component in the operation of your school. Safe water is supplied to your school by one of two ways:

1. **Municipal water** – Schools located in serviced areas of the region receive municipal water which has been treated and tested by the appropriate agencies (York Region Transportation and Works Department and the local area municipality) ensuring that you receive water that is safe for human consumption and use.
2. **Private water** – Schools not serviced by municipal water and are located in rural areas are supplied with water obtained from a private well located on the property. The school board is responsible for testing and treating these water supplies as outlined in the *Safe Drinking Water Act – Regulation 170/03 Drinking-Water Systems*. This regulation ensures that all water is sampled routinely, and tested daily, weekly, monthly and/or yearly for various parameters.

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### Safe Practices During a Boil Water or Drinking Water Advisory (DWA/BWA)

Although infrequent, the following are situations that may lead to York Region Community and Health Services Department issuing a Boil or Drinking Water Advisory (BWA/DWA) to your school:

- a. **Recent water test results indicate the water is bacteriologically Unsafe for Drinking.**
- b. **No water is available to service your facility.**  
This may be due to a watermain break, upgrading of municipal water system, well running dry, etc.

In general, a Boil Water Advisory (BWA) warns users of the water supply that all water used for cooking or drinking must be brought to a rolling boil for at least one minute prior to use. An alternative to using boiled water is commercially bottled water.

When a BWA is in place, water should NOT be used for drinking, food preparation, cooking, making ice, washing fruits or vegetables, or brushing teeth, unless the water is boiled or treated.

The York Region Community and Health Services Department provides the following guidelines for using water safely during a BWA:

- ***General Guide for Consumers***
- ***Food Service Establishments***
- ***Child Care Establishments***

York Region Community and Health Services is responsible for lifting the BWA and informing your school that the advisory has been lifted.

After a BWA has been lifted the following procedure should be performed before using the water for consumption:

- Run cold water faucets for one minute before using the water.
- Run drinking fountains for one minute before using the water.
- Flush all garden hoses by running cold water through them for one minute.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.
- Drain and refill hot water heaters set below 45°C (normal setting is 60°C).

Having knowledge of the drinking water system in your school ensures that all users of the system have access to a safe drinking water supply. Knowing this information also assists York Region Community and Health Services in reducing the incidence of waterborne illness in the population.

For more information or to speak with a Public Health Inspector, contact York Region *Health Connection* at **1-800-361-5653** ext. 4599.

Attachments:

*General Guide for Consumers*  
*Food Service Establishments*  
*Child Care Establishments*

S: c28/safe water program/education resources/school health services binder  
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