

Improvements to the Drinking Water Systems Regulation (O.Reg. 170/03) for Municipal Residential Systems

Safe drinking water is a priceless resource and everyone's responsibility, and the McGuinty government has listened to the concerns of drinking water system owners in Ontario. As part of its overall plan for clean, safe and affordable drinking water, the government has delivered on its promise to make the Drinking Water Systems Regulation (O. Reg. 170/03 made under the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*) more workable and affordable. The changes to this regulation improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the rules for the municipal and private residential systems that provide water to our homes, and for the small systems serving schools, day cares, and health/social care facilities which take care of our children, the sick and the elderly. This is good news for owners and operators of these regulated systems, and should help them to continue to play their role as providers of safe drinking water.

Ontario Regulation 170/03 applies to various types of drinking-water systems, including municipal residential drinking water systems that provide water to at least six homes on a year-round basis. The rules vary depending on whether the system is large (serves more than 100 homes) or small (serves between 6 and 100 homes). The changes below apply to municipal residential systems. If your system is a private residential system or serves a designated facility such as a school, day care, or health/social care facility, please refer to the appropriate information sheet at www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/sdwa/dwsr.htm

Highlights for Municipal Residential Systems

Testing:

- Less frequent testing (twice weekly) of chlorine residual in water distribution systems;
- Improved flexibility allowing persons other than certified operators to take turbidity or chlorine tests in systems with 100 or fewer homes;
- Clearer testing requirements for bacteria and less frequent testing for systems with 100 or fewer homes;
- Less frequent testing for chemicals for systems with 100 or fewer homes;
- Clearer definitions of terms such as weekly, bi-weekly and monthly to remove confusion.

Treatment:

- Eliminating the requirement for an Engineer's report;
- Point-of-entry treatment equipment allowed for systems with 100 or fewer homes;
- Improved flexibility for dispatching operators to equipment problems where automatic shut-offs are already in place.

Corrective Action:

- Clearer and less drastic corrective actions in response to adverse water quality to better focus on appropriate measures when there may be a risk to drinking water;
- Clearer direction on adverse conditions and corrective action related to low chlorine residual in the distribution system.

The Ministry of the Environment has also prepared a series of Technical Updates related to these amendments to O. Reg. 170/03. For more information please contact the ministry's Public Information Centre at 1-800-565-4923 or refer to the ministry website, www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/sdwa/dwsr.htm