

Clean Tap Water – one less reason to have to go to the store

(Ottawa, March 30, 2020) If you are on a municipal water system in Canada, clean, safe, drinking water is delivered to your home 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. As we all do our best to stay safely at home as much as possible during this COVID-19 situation, it is good to know that most Canadians can simply turn on the tap to get safe water. There is no need to get bottled water for daily use. While it is good to have some water in your home emergency kit, there is no need to stockpile water in fear of a shutdown.

“We want to ensure Canadians that their tap water is as safe as ever to drink and that the supply of clean water is secure” states Robert Haller, executive director of the Canadian Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA).

All Canadian municipalities follow the *Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines* for water treatment as established by Health Canada. Health Canada and the World Health Organization have confirmed that the COVID-19 outbreak is NOT considered a waterborne outbreak and that our current methods of water treatment kill viruses, including coronaviruses. They confirm that no extra measures are required to ensure safe drinking water.

“We each know that water is so essential to our lives – for drinking, cooking, washing, cleaning and toilets. So water and wastewater services are recognized as essential services in every community and our water professionals are designated critical frontline staff,” states Haller.

“It is reassuring,” states Haller “that well-planned emergency protocols have been activated by every Utility to ensure the safety of water production and staff well-being. They have the supplies they need for water treatment, sampling/testing and to ensure the health and safety of their staff to maintain water operations.”

Municipal emergency plans set in place procedures for stockpiling sufficient supplies of water treatment chemicals and testing equipment. Power is secured with back-up power generators. These emergency plans call for heightened standards for staff hygiene, safety and the use of personal protective equipment. Response to the COVID-19 outbreak has also seen the implementation of additional safety protocols for staff such as:

- all administrative staff work from home
- only essential staff permitted into treatment plants
- separation of operations staff through shift scheduling and workspace distancing

For communities under Boil Water Orders, those conditions still stand, but for reasons other than COVID-19. In the case of other emergencies or disasters that may affect water operations, municipal emergency plans have provisions for emergency water supplies which must now include consideration of COVID-19 concerns.

Safe drinking water is paramount to all Canadian municipalities. As health authorities stress the importance of hand washing and self-isolating, we want Canadians to have confidence in their municipal tap water that makes this easy. We also want to recognize the dedication of Canada's water professionals and their commitment to the safety of the communities they live in.

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To schedule interviews or for additional information, please contact: Don Huff, ECO Strategy at 416-805-7720 or huffd@ecostrategy.ca

Regional/Local Contacts: CWWA has professional members across Canada available for media interviews.

About the Canadian Water and Wastewater Association

The Canadian Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA) is the national association representing Canada's municipal water and wastewater professionals and the private sector partners that support them. CWWA was founded in 1986 to facilitate knowledge sharing and to represent this sector at a national level. The association is recognized as THE national voice of this public service sector and focuses its activities and communications on significant national issues, trends and events.

References:

Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines from Health Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/water-quality/drinking-water/canadian-drinking-water-guidelines.html>

World Health Organization (WHO) technical brief

<https://www.who.int/publications-detail/water-sanitation-hygiene-and-waste-management-for-covid-19>

Health Canada website for COVID-19 information

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>