

Ministry of Health

Small Drinking Water Systems under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*

Operator Training

Working Together to Safeguard our Health

This fact sheet provides basic information. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Talk to a health care professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle, or treatment.

Small drinking water systems in Ontario

The Ministry of Health has oversight of small drinking water systems in Ontario. This fact sheet is to help you become familiar with Ontario's small drinking water system legislation, Ontario Regulation 319/08 (Small Drinking Water Systems) made under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. Under this law, you are required to provide users with safe drinking water at all times.

What do you need to know to operate a small drinking water system?

In accordance with section 7 of Ontario Regulation 319/08 (Small Drinking Water Systems), a public health inspector will conduct a site-specific risk assessment and issue a directive for each small drinking water system.

This directive will outline the operational requirements that must be carried out by the owner or operator of the small drinking water system, as well as specific operator training requirements appropriate for operating your small drinking water system.

To find out more about the regulatory requirements for your small drinking water system, including choosing the type of training that is appropriate for operating your small drinking water system, contact the local public health unit to consult with a public health inspector to obtain fact sheets or other information.

What are the first steps to providing safe drinking water?

As the owner of a small drinking water system, it is your responsibility to ensure that all operators of the system know how to adequately operate the system to provide water to users that is safe to drink at all times. To better understand this important responsibility a number of learning options are available including:

- Self-directed learning.
- Educational material available from the local health unit.
- Other training, including courses approved by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.

1. Self-directed learning

There are various types of educational material available to you that provide basic information in the form of booklets, fact sheets or brochures on how to operate your small drinking water system. This is just a small sample of what is available:

- Product literature and operational guide that is provided by the equipment manufacturer.
- Educational material (e.g., best practices documents) provided by various professional associations.
- Educational material (e.g., fact sheets on the proper collection of samples) provided by your local health unit.
- Guidance documents and other instructional material from various government agencies.

2. Educational material available from your local health unit

Your local public health unit is an excellent resource for finding out how best to become informed about operating a safe drinking water system.

The public health inspector will provide you with onsite training on certain aspects of your small drinking water system.

Other education and training options may be offered by local water quality associations or professional associations.

3. Other training

This includes any training program that has been required by a directive issued by the public health inspector as being appropriate to provide you with the required knowledge to operate your small drinking water system. These may include any of the following:

- Any course that is offered or recommended by a manufacturer of treatment devices or recommended by your local health unit.
- Any of the correspondence courses approved by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks that are offered by third party providers (e.g., local community colleges or other professional associations) or the Walkerton Clean Water Centre.

How will I know what type of training is best for me?

In determining what level of training is appropriate for you, a public health inspector will conduct a site-specific risk assessment of your small drinking water system. The resulting directive that the public health inspector issues for your system may include specific operator training requirements based on the type of small drinking water system that you operate.

Where can I find additional information?

Please remember...

This fact sheet is only a summary of your responsibilities as the owner or operator of a small drinking water system and is not a substitute for legal advice.

For a more complete understanding of your legal responsibilities as an owner or operator, refer to Ontario Regulation 319/08 (Small Drinking Water Systems) or any directives issued on your system.

In addition, you should become familiar with the procedure documents produced to help you efficiently operate a small drinking water system:

- Procedure for Disinfection of Drinking Water in Ontario:
www.ontario.ca/page/procedure-disinfection-drinking-water-ontario
- Procedure for Corrective Action for Small Drinking Water Systems that are Not Currently Using Chlorine [Consult your local public health unit for this resource.]

You may also find additional information on the following Ontario ministry websites:

Acts and Regulations: www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/index.html

- Ontario Regulation 319/08: www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/080319

Ministry of Health: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/>

- Current list of local public health units:
www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks:

www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-environment-conservation-parks

- Current list of licensed laboratories: www.ontario.ca/page/list-licensed-laboratories

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA):

www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/