

June 7, 2006

AMENDING ONTARIO'S DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS REGULATION

Ontario Regulation 170/03

This regulation applies to large and small municipal residential systems and non-municipal year-round residential systems (e.g., privately owned mobile home parks, rural subdivisions). It also applies to any system serving a designated facility (e.g., schools, day cares, health care and or social care facilities).

Amendments to Ontario Regulation 170/03

The amendments to Reg. 170 are risk-based and are designed to safeguard the quality of Ontario's drinking water, while making the regulation more workable and affordable for operators of residential drinking water systems and systems serving designated facilities. They add clarity and flexibility to the testing and operational regimes set out in Reg. 170 and in some cases, could reduce the cost of regulatory compliance. The amendments include:

Testing:

- Greater flexibility for timing of testing chlorine residual in water distribution systems.
- Clearer and less frequent microbiological testing requirements for designated facilities, small municipal residential and non-municipal year-round residential systems.
- Less frequent testing for chemical parameters at small municipal residential systems and systems serving mobile home parks and rural subdivisions.
- Clearer definitions of terms such as weekly, bi-weekly and monthly to remove confusion about how often testing must be done.

Corrective action:

- Clearer and updated 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 chlorine residual in the distribution system.

Operational requirements:

- Exemption from treatment option for groundwater-based systems serving private year-round residential systems that meet strict safety conditions set out in the regulation.
- Providing small municipal residential and private year-round residential systems with the option of using point of entry treatment as an alternative to centralized treatment and distribution of water, subject to following the requirements set out in the regulation.
- Mandatory registration of all systems subject to Reg. 170 to ensure the ministry has information about the system.

- Eliminating the requirement for an Engineer's Report (former schedule 20), for municipal residential systems. Elements of this report will eventually be captured under a new comprehensive licensing regime as recommended by Justice O'Connor.
- For systems that require an Engineering Evaluation Report instead of an approval (e.g., private year-round residential systems and systems serving a designated facility), eliminating the requirement for ongoing update reports to be done on a five or 10 year cycle. Owners who alter their system in the future are still required to submit an Engineering Evaluation Report.
- Clear requirements to ensure that systems using hauled water have properly constructed and maintained cisterns to protect drinking water.
- Flexibility for performing operational checks within all systems except large municipal residential systems.

Improving drinking water regulation in Ontario

Amending Reg.170 is one of the steps in the government's plan to improve the regulation of drinking water systems. In May 2005, the government announced its proposal to make public health units responsible for ensuring facilities such as churches, community halls, bed and breakfasts and tourist outfitters have safe drinking water.

On June 3, 2005, systems serving non-residential and seasonal residential uses became subject to Ontario Regulation 252/05. The new regulation establishes a basic regulatory framework focused on maintaining a level of microbiological testing, reporting and corrective action that provides a high level of public health protection while reducing the financial burden on owners. The Ministry of the Environment will continue to oversee these systems until the intended transfer to the public health units.

For more information about the amendments to the regulation please visit <http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/sdwa/dwsr.htm>.

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