

PRESS RELEASE

Understanding Local Drinking Water Quality

Ucluelet, BC— Municipal and provincial owned and operated water systems are required to test their water according to the federal *Clean Water Act*. Regulated water supplies must test for the specific parameters in the Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines (CDWQG) list. The District of Ucluelet regularly and routinely tests and treats our local water sources to ensure they meet or exceed these guidelines. Weekly samples are collected at designated locations within the water system that give an overall representation of the water contained in the entire system; these samples are then tested for materials that pose a health risk, such as fecal coliforms. Annual potability tests are also conducted, which provide information on the chemical and physical properties of our water.

The District of Ucluelet would like all water users to know that your tap water is safe to drink. If a test result were to indicate the presence of harmful material, an immediate alert for a Boil Water Advisory would be issued to the community. Water test results are done by a third-party lab and are available for public viewing at the District office or online at www.ucluelet.ca. The presence of discoloured water within the water system is caused by a number of contributing factors, including the water's chemistry (our aquifer contains naturally occurring iron and manganese). These factors can affect the aesthetics of water, but – as determined by the standards set by Health Canada – they do not cause adverse health effects.

In 2014, the community was invited to attend a town hall meeting where these concerns were discussed alongside potential strategies the District could adopt to reduce or mitigate these aesthetic issues. Current initiatives being employed include regular flushing of the water system, “pigging” (manual cleaning) of our largest transmission lines, and cleaning the two water reservoirs. These strategies are working to reduce the severity and frequency of discoloured water, but cannot eliminate them completely.

The Ucluelet Council, acting on behalf of the community, may choose to pursue additional strategies. These were also presented at the town hall meeting in 2014, and included measures such as building a municipal filtration system (cost estimate up to \$7,000,000) or seeking a new water source (Kennedy Lake). Further options and their costs can be found in the Town Hall Meeting Q&A document located at the District office or online at www.ucluelet.ca.

Some homeowners may opt to install home filtration systems to improve the taste, smell or appearance of their drinking water. The District does not have the ability to regulate or monitor home filtration use, but we strongly encourage residents who employ these systems to be well-educated in their proper use and operation. A system that is not adequately maintained can allow high levels of bacteria to accumulate on the filter and be released into your water, which can pose a health risk.

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Anyone who has questions about their water or would like to address a complaint to the District may do so by calling the District office at 250-726-7744, emailing to info@ucluelet.ca, or by visiting the District during regular office hours. We do also respond to messages received via our Facebook page, but regret we cannot monitor other social media channels or Facebook groups.