

# Water Services: Standard of Care

Understanding your  
role in providing safe  
drinking water

# Agenda

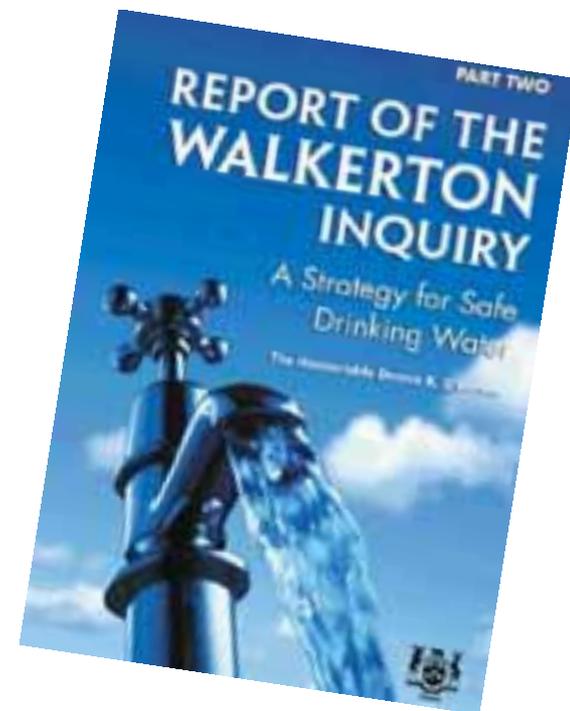
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1. Standard of Care
2. Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002
3. Water Services Quality Policy
4. Drinking Water Treatment and Distribution
5. Effective Monitoring and Reporting
6. Municipal Drinking Water Licence
7. Financial & Infrastructure Planning
8. Managing the Risks to Drinking Water
9. Annual & Summary Reports

# Standard of Care

## Report of the Walkerton Inquiry, 2002

“Given that the safety of drinking water is essential for public health, those who discharge the oversight responsibilities of the municipality should be held to a statutory standard of care.”



*- Justice Dennis O'Connor*

# Standard of Care

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## What is it?

- Under the *Safe Drinking Water Act (2002)*, as a municipal official, you must practice due diligence to protect public health when making decisions that could affect the drinking water.
- Severe penalties are possible for municipal officials who fail to act in good faith and do not exercise honesty, competence and integrity to ensure the protection and safety of the users of municipal drinking water systems.

# Standard of Care

## Things to remember: It's Your Duty

- It is your duty to ensure safe drinking water.
- It applies to those with decision-making responsibility for municipal drinking water systems or oversee the operating authority of the system.
- There are legal consequences for failing to carry out the duty, including possible fines or imprisonment.



# Standard of Care

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## Things to remember: Be Informed

- You don't have to be an expert, but you need to be informed.
- You should be asking questions and getting answers.
- Seek advice from those with expertise and act prudently on their advice.

**You can rely on Water Services' expertise.**

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# Standard of Care

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## Things to remember: Be Vigilant



- Complacency can pose one of the greatest risks to drinking water systems.
- Never simply assume that all is well with the drinking water systems under your care.
- The health of your community depends on diligent and prudent oversight.

# Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002

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## Section 11: Duties of Owners and Operating Authorities

- Provide water that meets all prescribed drinking water quality standards.
- Operate in accordance with the act and its regulations, and keep system in a fit state of repair.
- Ensure that drinking water system are appropriately resourced.
- Comply with all sampling, testing and monitoring requirements.
- Meet all reporting requirements, including annual reporting to the public.

# Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002

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## Section 11: Actions required of owners and operating authorities

- Sampling and testing of drinking water.
- Using an accredited laboratory.
- Reporting of adverse test results that exceed any standards in the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards Regulation.
- Obtaining a drinking water licence, including a financial plan.
- Ensuring the drinking water system is operated by an accredited operating authority.
- Ensure management structures to maintain certified operators to operate the system.

# Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002

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## Section 19: Your Duty and Liability

- Extends legal responsibility to people with decision-making authority over municipal drinking water systems and those that oversee the accredited operating authority for the system.
- You must exercise the level of care, diligence and skill with regard to a municipal drinking water system that a *reasonably prudent person* would be expected to exercise in a similar situation.
- You must act honestly, competently and with integrity.

# **Taking Care of Your Drinking Water:**

## **A Guide for Members of Municipal Councils**

What should I be Asking?

- What are the risks to public health?
- Are there any areas of risk that council needs to address?
- What checks and balances are in place to ensure the continued safety of our drinking water?
- Are we meeting our legislative and regulatory requirements?
- What is the public health impact or long-term cost of deferring this decision?

# Water Quality Policy

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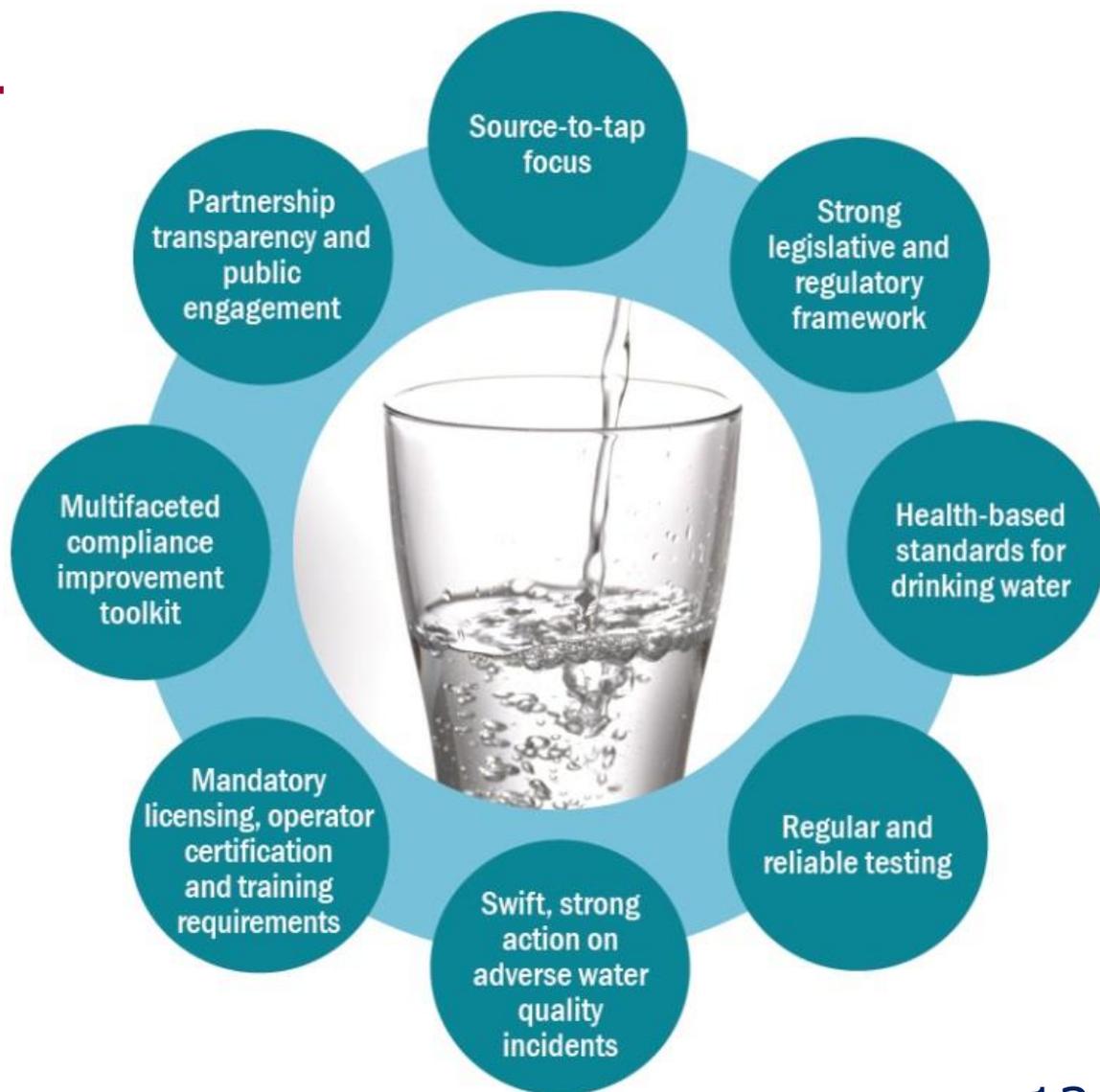
**Water Services at the City of Guelph is committed to providing consumers with a safe, consistent supply of high quality drinking water while meeting or exceeding, and continually improving on, legal, operational, and quality management system requirements.**

**Delivering your water with dedication, professionalism and care.**



# Protecting Ontario's Drinking Water

## Drinking water protection safety net



# Drinking Water Treatment

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## Ensuring effective treatment

- Two sources of drinking water in Guelph:
  - True groundwater.
  - Groundwater under the direct influence of surface water with effective in-situ filtration.
- Water quality monitoring.
- Redundant equipment for major processes.
- Provincially certified operators.
- Proactive monitoring and treatment, where necessary.

# Drinking Water Distribution

## Ensuring water quality to every customer

- **Effective design and build of water infrastructure**
  - Proper sizing of watermains to meet community needs.
  - Planning for the future (water towers, new subdivisions).
  - Redundancy in the distribution system.
- **Effective operation**
  - Monitoring and maintaining pressure.
  - Remote monitoring and operational control.
  - Monitoring water quality.
  - Watermain cleaning program.
  - Leak detection and condition assessments.
- **Effective maintenance**
  - Timely response to breakdowns (leaks, mainbreaks, customer concerns).

# **Effective Monitoring & Reporting**

## **Adverse Water Quality Incident (AWQI) response**

- Immediate notifications when there is an adverse sample is required under the *Safe Drinking Water Act (2002)*:
  - Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) Spills Action Centre.
  - Wellington-Dufferin Guelph Public Health (WDGPH).
  - Owner (members of council).
- In 2022, there was one (1) adverse water quality incidents.
  - More information can be found in the Annual & Summary Reports: [Guelph.ca/water](https://guelph.ca/water) under the water quality tab.

# Compliance with Regulations

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## MECP inspection results

- Our water system is inspected once per year.
- We work with the Ministry to improve our processes in order to ensure that we are delivering high quality drinking water.
- We complete monthly compliance audits (internally) to be aware of any issues prior to the inspections.

# Annual Report & Summary Report

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## What they tell you about your system

- Description of the drinking water system and chemicals used.
- Summary of the results of required testing.
- Summary of any adverse test results.
- Description of any corrective actions.
- Description of any major expenses to install, repair or replace required equipment.
- Information about any requirements that were not met under the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Description of measures taken to correct failures.
- Comparison of the system's flow rates from previous years to help assess existing and planned water use.

**[Guelph.ca/water](http://Guelph.ca/water) under the Water Quality Tab**

# Municipal Drinking Water Licence

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## Approval to operate the Guelph Drinking Water System

The Municipal Drinking Water Licence requires these 5 components to be in place:

1. Drinking Water Works Permit
2. Permits to Take Water
3. Operational Plan
4. Accredited Operating Authority
5. Financial Plan

# Municipal Drinking Water Licence

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## 1. Drinking Water Works Permit (DWWP)

- A permit describing current water system infrastructure and future alterations or upgrades to the water system.

## 2. Permit to Take Water (PTTW)

- A permit to take 50,000L or more of source water per day.
- Guelph has 18 permits to take water.

# Municipal Drinking Water Licence

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## 3. Operational Plan

- A plan prepared in accordance with the Drinking Water Quality Management Standard (DWQMS) required under the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002 that documents Water Services' Quality Management System.
- Endorsed by Council (owner of the system).

## 4. Accredited Operating Authority

- Water Services must be accredited to the DWQMS.
- This is done by a comprehensive audit and review of the Operational Plan by an independent certified accreditation body appointed by the Province.

# Municipal Drinking Water Licence

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## 5. Financial Plan

- A long range financial plan developed to ensure the financial sustainability of the drinking water system.
- Required under O. Reg. 453/07.
- The Long Range Financial Plan is currently being updated and will be presented to Council by end of year 2023.

# Financial Planning

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## Ensuring financial stability

- Imperative to ensure that your community continues to enjoy clean, safe drinking water.
- You have an important role to play in ensuring that appropriate resources are made available.
- Municipal councils have ultimate responsibility for approving financial plans that are prepared for the municipality.
  - Ensuring revenue collected will meet the needs of those services.
  - Life-cycle planning.
  - Asset management.

# Infrastructure Planning

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## Ensuring there is sustainable drinking water infrastructure

- Machinery, equipment and structures.
- The Operating Authority must:
  - Annually review the drinking water infrastructure;
  - Provide a summary of the programs in place to maintain, rehabilitate and review the infrastructure; and
  - Monitor the effectiveness of its maintenance program.
- This is normally accomplished through the budget process.

# Managing the Risks to Drinking Water

## Risk Assessments



- An orderly methodology of identifying hazards or hazardous events that may affect the safety of drinking water and evaluating their significance.
- Identifies potential hazardous events facing your drinking water system i.e. main breaks, spills, assesses the impact and the control measures in place.
- “Adequate municipal funding is a key component of risk management.”

– Former Councillor Ken Graham, Town of Smith Falls

# Managing the Risks to Drinking Water

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## Emergency planning for drinking water

- The Water Services Emergency Response Plan outlines how Water Services will respond to a drinking water emergency and how and when you will be notified.
- Plan developed in partnership with Corporate Emergency Management and with the support of Engineering and Transportation Services.
- Member of OnWARN:
  - Ontario Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network.
  - A province-wide network of “utilities helping utilities”.
  - Promotes emergency preparedness, disaster response, mutual aid and assistance for water and wastewater utilities.

# Thank you!

*Questions or Comments?*

**For more information:  
[guelph.ca/water](http://guelph.ca/water)**