

APPENDIX B - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON WATER QUALITY

➤ **Is my water safe to drink?**

To protect public health, the Ministry has established the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards. These standards help ensure that water used by the public is free from disease-causing organisms, harmful amounts of toxic chemicals and radioactive materials.

➤ **Why do we use chlorine?**

Chlorine is used to kill bacteria, viruses and other organisms that can cause illness. Ontario Regulation 170/03 regulates the amount of chlorine that must be added. The regulation states that we must maintain free chlorine residual at a minimum level of 0.05 mg/L and should not exceed a maximum level of 4.0 mg/L.

➤ **Is the water in Caledon Village and Alton hard?**

Hardness is typically dissolved calcium and magnesium in water measured as calcium carbonate. Upon heating, hard water has a tendency to form scale deposits or a white film and can form excessive scum with regular soaps. Conversely, soft water may result in accelerated corrosion of water pipes. Although Caledon Village and Alton water is considered hard, it is still acceptable for domestic purposes (see page 31 for test results).

➤ **Should I buy a water softener?**

The purchase of a water softener is based mostly on personal preference. Soap suds are formed more readily with soft water, therefore less detergent is used. The use of a water softener also reduces the formation of hardness scale in pipes and hot water tanks. Some consumers do not like the feel of soft water. For example, after rinsing with soft water you may still feel a soap film on your skin.

➤ **Why does my kettle get a white film inside?**

When water is boiled, calcium and manganese precipitate out of the water and deposits on the heating element and inner surfaces of the kettle. This does not pose a health risk. The deposit can be prevented by regular rinsing with vinegar or lemon juice.

➤ **Why does the water sometimes look “cloudy” or “milky”?**

Tiny bubbles of air in the water cause the cloudiness. Those bubbles may also cause the water to appear white or foamy, similar to the appearance of water in a rushing stream. This does not

indicate any problem and clears when the water is left to sit for a few minutes. This is an aesthetic issue, not a health concern. If cloudy water does persist, please notify the Region of Peel so that the matter can be investigated.

➤ **Is fluoride added to my water?**

The Region of Peel does not add fluoride to the water in the Caledon Village and Alton areas. Any fluoride present in the water is naturally occurring.

➤ **Why does the water sometimes look “rusty”, yellow or tea-like?**

Yellow water is a common occurrence. Excessive levels of iron in drinking water may impart a yellow to brownish colour, often seen on laundered clothes, plumbing fixtures, and the water itself. Running your tap for a few minutes can clear the colour. No health risks are associated with this discolouration. If you are experiencing problems and your neighbours are not, the hot water tank or the pipes in your home are likely causing the problem.

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➤ **Does the Region of Peel knock on the door to test water or leave a bottle to fill?**

Some of our water programs require testing on private premises, such as residential homes or businesses. This would only be done by Peel with prior arrangements with the owner or tenant of the premise. Based on the stringent provincial guidelines, drinking water samples must be collected and handled by qualified persons and analysed at an accredited laboratory; therefore, Peel staff would not leave a bottle at the door requesting a sample of water for testing, and will always carry a Region of Peel identification card.

There are many responsible home water treatment businesses that offer products that live up to their claims. Unfortunately, some companies and salespersons resort to grabbing the public’s attention and misinforming them about the safety of the municipal drinking water supplies in an effort to sell their products.

As of March 1, 2018, door to door sales of water heaters and treatment devices are prohibited by the Government of Ontario. To ensure that you are informed about the water quality in Peel and less likely to become a target for a company trying to sell you costly and inappropriate water treatment equipment, or, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Water Quality Team at 905-791-7800 ext. 4685 or via e-mail to WaterQualityInquiries@peelregion.ca. You can find more information on our website at <http://www.peelregion.ca/articles/door-to-door-agents.asp>.

➤ **Will you come to my house and take a sample?**

If your water is supplied by the Region of Peel then you have no reason for concern about the safety of your drinking water. The Region of Peel operates, maintains and monitors its municipal drinking water systems in accordance with strict provincial regulations and Peel's drinking water continually meets the established water quality standards.

Some of our water programs require testing on private premises, such as the Community Lead Testing Program. This testing would only be done by a certified Region of Peel operator with prior arrangements made with the owner or tenant. More information about the Community Lead Testing Program can be found in Section 5.5 of this report.

The Region of Peel collects a large number of samples from its drinking water systems to demonstrate high quality water supply. The Region will only respond to a customer enquiry/request by undertaking sampling at private taps if there is reason to believe that water quality has been compromised that impacts both the tap water and municipal supply system. Region staff occasionally sample at residential or commercial taps in conjunction with nearby work in the private or municipal water system. Region staff will carry a Region of Peel identification card.

➤ **Why is lead sometimes present in water?**

Lead is a metal substance that can dissolve in water. Traditionally, lead compounds were used in plumbing fittings and in solder to join pipes together in water distribution systems. If water stays in a piping system that contains lead for long periods of time, lead may dissolve into the water.

➤ **How does lead affect my Health?**

For more information, contact Peel Public Health at <http://www.peelregion.ca/health/>

To view our Lead in Water Pamphlet, please visit <https://www.peelregion.ca/health/enviroNew/athome/lead.pdf>

Water Quality at Home Tips

Water Quality Concern	Possible Cause	Suggested Solutions
Chlorine Odour and Taste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chlorine getting combined with organics Chlorination of new water mains Effects of new plumbing Change of residency as chlorine form and concentration varies from location to location 	<p>Chlorine is necessary to control disease-causing organisms. To minimize the chlorine taste and smell in water;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill a pitcher and let it stand in the refrigerator overnight Blend the water for 5 minutes or pour between containers about 10 times Boil the water, let it cool down and then refrigerate Home plumbing may be flushed for a minute before water use (especially in the mornings, after water stands in the lines overnight)
Musty/Earthy Odour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algae that bloom in the lake in the summer produces a metabolite called 'geosmin', which causes musty/earthy odour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The algae are harmless and although the water may not be aesthetically pleasing, it is safe.
Rotten Egg/Septic Odour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sink and floor drains Faucet aerators/screens Poorly maintained hot water tanks Dead-end water mains or areas with low water demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refrain from flushing solids/organics down the drain; stagnant wastewater in the drain may generate foul odours and potentially plug the drain Clean faucet aerators and screens on frequent basis Hot water tanks should be flushed periodically (every 2 to 3 years) to remove rust and scale
Milky/Cloudy Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air trapped in water due to water main breaks, water temperature or pressure change, plumbing work, construction work in the area, water shut-offs, faucet screens Hot water tank temperature may be set too high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run all cold water taps at once for a couple of minutes to flush the lines and release the air Lower the hot water tank temperature if above 140F (60°C)
Blue/Green Stains on Fixtures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copper in water due to copper plumbing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run water for 30 seconds to reduce the effects of local plumbing (metal concentration) prior to water consumption Keep fixtures dry and drip-free
Brown/Dirty Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in water flow due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water main break Hydrant use Local Fire Dead ends Poorly maintained hot water tanks No water use for a longer period of time; return from vacation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open cold-water faucets and flush water for 5 to 10 minutes, until clear Refrain from doing laundry to prevent clothes staining Hot water tank should be flushed periodically (every 2 to 3 years) Run cold and hot water separately to verify the cause; if hot water is the cause - tank needs a flush Open several faucets and flush the water standing in pipes that may have dissolved pipe scale material
White Flakes/Particles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flakes are scale caused by hardness Faulty or disintegrating hot water tank tubing or lining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be reduced by frequent cleaning of faucet aerators/screens and/or regular flushing of hot water tanks Contact the hot water tank company
Pink Staining on Fixtures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pink pigmented bacteria called <i>Serratia marcescens</i> Originates from the Air, not the water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrub surfaces with a brush, disinfect with a strong bleach solution, allow disinfectant to penetrate for 10-20 minutes, rinse

Report Accessibility

The 2018 Annual Reports can be viewed by the public online at:

<http://www.peelregion.ca/pw/water/quality/reports> or picked up at the Region of Peel Office at 10 Peel Centre Drive, Brampton.

Other sources from which you can get more information about drinking water and related issues:

 <p>Region of Peel working with you</p> <p>For information on Water Quality:</p> <p>Region of Peel 10 Peel Centre Dr. Brampton ON L6T 4B9 Phone: 905-791-7800 Ext. 4685 Website: http://www.peelregion.ca/pw/water/quality/ E-mail: WaterQualityInquiries@peelregion.ca</p>	 <p>Region of Peel working with you</p> <p>For information on Lead Testing of Drinking Water:</p> <p>Region of Peel 10 Peel Centre Dr. Brampton ON L6T 4B9 Phone: 905-791-7800 Ext. 4685 Website: www.peelregion.ca/pw/water/quality/lead-in-water E-mail: WaterQualityInquiries@peelregion.ca</p>
 <p>Region of Peel working with you</p> <p>Region of Peel Public Health 7120 Hurontario St., 8th Floor Mississauga, ON L5W 1N4 Phone: 905-799-7700 Website: http://www.peelregion.ca/health/</p>	 <p>230 Advance Blvd. Brampton, ON L6T 4T6 Phone: 905-791-7800 Ext. 4409 Web Site: http://www.peelregion.ca/watersmartpeel/</p>
 <p>Ministry of the Environment, Conservation & Parks Public Information Centre Phone: 416-325-4000 Toll-Free: 1-800-565-4923 Web site: www.ontario.ca/environment</p>	 <p>Environment and Climate Change Canada Inquiry Centre Phone: 819-997-2800 Toll-Free: 1-800-668-6767 Web Site: http://www.ec.gc.ca</p>