

March 18, 2020

Dear Community Based Water Monitors (CBWMs):

**Re: Adapting Routine Drinking Water Sampling Strategy**

This letter will provide guidance to CBWM’s on adapting the Drinking Water Safety Program due to disruptions being caused by COVID‐19. In order to maintain confidence in the community’s water system(s), we are recommending that the CBWM:

* **Temporarily suspends *routine sampling of private homes as social distancing is*** one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak**.**
* Respect any access restrictions for public buildings, e.g. if closed or restricting visitors. Sample at the water treatment plant if no public buildings are accessible.
* Focus on regular bacteriological monitoring of public and semi-public water systems and water delivery trucks. This includes free chlorine and total chlorine, and turbidity tests.
* Maintain close communication with the Water Treatment Plant Operator in case operational changes may require increased sampling.
* Have a trained back-up CBWM in place, if possible.
* Consult with your EPHO if you have questions, concerns or challenges in maintaining regular monitoring.

Proper handwashing has always been important for CBWMs. This, and proper cough/ sneeze etiquette, can help reduce the risk of infection or spreading infection. Hands should be washed often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. For water systems under an advisory:

* Do Not Consume Advisory: Safe to wash hands
* Boil Water Advisory: Safe to wash hands
* Do Not Use: Use bottled water with soap or hand sanitizer for hand hygiene.

The provision of safe water, sanitation and hygienic conditions is essential to protecting human health at all times, especially during an infectious disease outbreak. Your role in ensuring consistent monitoring of the drinking water supply and prompt notification of any unsatisfactory samples can help ensure the health of your community.

If you have questions or concerns please contact me.

Cc: Chief and Council

 Health Director