


Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 20, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Changes to the Ontario Public Health Standards' Safe Water Protocols (Recreational Water, Beach Management, Drinking Water) - BOH15004 (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

Not Applicable

Information:

This report is to inform the Board of Health regarding relevant changes to the following Protocols under the Ontario Public Health Standards and the actions taken by Public Health Services (PHS).

The following Protocols were revised and issued in September 2014 by the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario:

- Recreational Water Protocol
- Beach Management Protocol and Beach Management Guidance Document
- Drinking Water Protocol

The changes, relevance and actions are as follows:

1. Recreational Water Protocol Section 1) Operational Roles and Responsibilities; Surveillance and Inspection; Public Beaches d) i) 2nd Bullet

Change:

According to the Beach Management Guidance Document 2014, the Board of Health shall determine the suitability of the site for public recreational use as supported by a water sampling program and appropriate level of surveillance, in collaboration with the owner/operator.

Relevance:

PHS will review water quality conditions at all public recreational beaches. Should any beaches be identified with water quality that may make them unsuitable for public recreational use, PHS will work with the beach owner/operator to determine if beach water quality can be improved or if the beach should be deemed unsuitable for public recreational use. Preliminary data analysis indicates that one public beach in Hamilton Harbour (Bayfront Park Beach) requires further investigation to determine if it should continue to be used by the public.

PHS samples and tests the water quality at the following eight public beaches in Hamilton between Victoria Day and Labour Day:

Public Beach	Owner
Bayfront Park Beach	City of Hamilton
Beach Boulevard	City of Hamilton
Binbrook Conservation Area	Niagara Conservation Authority
Confederation Park	City of Hamilton
Christie Conservation Area	Hamilton Conservation Authority
Pier 4 Beach	City of Hamilton
Valens Conservation Area	Hamilton Conservation Authority
Van Wagner's Beach	City of Hamilton

Historically the water quality at Bayfront Park Beach is unsuitable for swimming more often than it is suitable for swimming. For example, in 2014 Bayfront Beach was not suitable for swimming 62.5% of the time. The cause is excessive levels of E. coli bacteria in the water or the presence of microcystin producing blue green algae (cyanobacteria) which pose a risk to human health.

Since 2005 PHS has worked with the City of Hamilton Public Works, Environment Canada, the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan, and the Bay Area Restoration

Council to assist with improving the water quality at Hamilton Harbour beaches. The water quality at Pier 4 Beach has improved; however, Bayfront Park Beach remains problematic.

Action:

Assess the sampling program data after the 2015 swimming season and recommend to the Board of Health whether or not Bayfront Park Beach is a suitable site for public recreational use.

Public Works, Corporate Assets & Strategic Planning Division, Waterfront Development Office shall be undertaking a water quality study for Bayfront Beach in 2015 with intention to implement a remediation plan in 2016/17 depending on the outcome of the study.

PHS has informed representatives of the City of Hamilton Public Works Department, Environment Canada, the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan, and the Bay Area Restoration Council of this new role and responsibility for the Board of Health.

2. Recreational Water Protocol; Beach Management Guidance Document; Communication

Change:

New communication section regarding the responsibilities of the Board of Health to communicate to the beach owner regarding water sample test results; placement and removal of signs regarding health and safety risks; and the placement and removal of barriers when a beach is closed or re-opened.

Relevance:

PHS already performs these responsibilities.

Action:

Continue to perform these responsibilities.

3. Recreational Water Protocol Section 3) Promoting Public Awareness and Education of Operators; b) ii)

Change:

The Board of Health shall promote recreational water facility training to owners and operators of public regulated pools and spas (hot tubs).

Public pools and spas are regulated under the Health Protection and Promotion Act under the Public Pools Regulation and Public Spas Regulation and generally consist of the following:

- The City owned and operated swimming pools and spas (hot tubs); and
- Swimming pools and spas (hot tubs) at hotels, apartment buildings, mobile home parks, campgrounds, and other locations where the general public has access.

The training is to cover public health legislation and regulations; prevention of illness, injury or death; water chemistry; sanitary operation of the facility; provision of safety equipment; emergency procedures; safety supervision; and record keeping.

This does not apply to private residential swimming pools and hot tubs.

Relevance:

Promoting a recreational water facility training program is a new activity.

Action:

Staff are exploring options for how to promote a public pool and public spa (hot tub) training program in 2016. Training materials for public pools were developed in 2014. Training materials for public spas are being developed in 2015.

4. Recreational Water Protocol Section 4) Reporting; Recreational Water and Beach Safety Activity Reports; b) i) and ii)

Change:

New list of information that the Board of Health shall provide to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care regarding recreational water and beach safety activities. The information consists of the following:

- Total number of: Class A public pools; Class B public pools; Public spas; and Non-regulated recreational water facilities; and
- For each type of recreational water facility listed above, report the total number of: Routine inspections; Re-inspections; Complaints; Ordered closures; and Summons issued (summarized by type of violation).

Relevance:

PHS already collects the information that needs to be reported.

Action:

Report the information to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

5. Recreational Water Protocol Section 4) Reporting; Recreational Water Facility Disclosure and Notification of Beach Posting Information; c)

Change:

A new requirement to establish and implement a procedure for public disclosure of results of inspections of recreational water facilities, public beaches, and waterfront areas that are part of a recreational camp.

Relevance:

PHS has achieved the minimum requirements by posting information on the City's website (www.hamilton.ca/safewater) that informs the public how to obtain the results of inspections of recreational water facilities, public beaches, and waterfront areas that are part of a recreational camp.

Action:

PHS is currently exploring an expansion of the inspection disclosure systems for multiple PHS' programs. A report to Board of Health will follow in 2015 with a plan for a more comprehensive disclosure system that increases public access to public health inspection results.

6. Drinking Water Protocol Section 3) Drinking Water Awareness and Education; a) i)

Change:

Engage in activities to ensure the sustainability and safety of source water and water supplies through collaboration with stakeholders such as local conservation authorities, community groups and municipalities.

Relevance:

This is a new activity that PHS is fulfilling.

Action:

PHS has done the following to fulfill this activity:

- Alternate sharing the Medical Officer of Health Liaison position with Halton Region PHS on the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Committee; last filled 2011-2014.
- Developed a Liaison Committee with Hamilton Water to promote collaboration, communication, information sharing, and planning between PHS and Public Works to be prepared to respond to municipal drinking water issues within the City of Hamilton.
- Annual public education and outreach activities to mark World Water Day.

- Collaborate with Public Works, Hamilton Water, Sustainable Initiatives Section regarding source water protection and planning applications.
- Semi-annual meetings with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) to discuss and share information regarding public health issues and matters regarding existing drinking water systems within the Health Unit, applications to issue, amend, suspend, or revoke an approval, permit, or license of a drinking water system, and regulatory oversight and sharing expertise regarding the inspection of drinking water systems.
- Review MOECC drinking water system inspection reports for public health implications.

7. Drinking Water Protocol Section 3) Drinking Water Awareness and Education; a)ii)

Change:

Increase public awareness and advocate for healthy public policy for safe water supplies related to the effects of climate change such as severe weather events and droughts.

Relevance:

This is a new activity.

Action:

PHS provides information via the City's website regarding how rural residents should deal with flooding conditions that could adversely affect the safety of their well water. PHS liaises with the MOECC regarding applications for Permits To Take Water (PTTW). PHS will initiate looking for means to further public awareness and advocate for the healthy public policy regarding the effects of climate change on water supplies.

8. Drinking Water Protocol Section 4) Reporting; Safe Water Activity Reports; a)

Change:

New requirement to annually report safe water activities to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. The report includes the total number of: small drinking water system inspections; small drinking water systems by risk category; directives issued or amended; enforcement actions; and drinking water systems within the City of Hamilton regulated under Regulation 170.

Relevance:

PHS has satisfied the new reporting requirement.

Action:

Continue to submit annual reports.