

Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development's Municipal Drinking Water Program

Approximately 3 million Albertans receive their drinking water from waterworks systems regulated by Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) through the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* (EPEA).

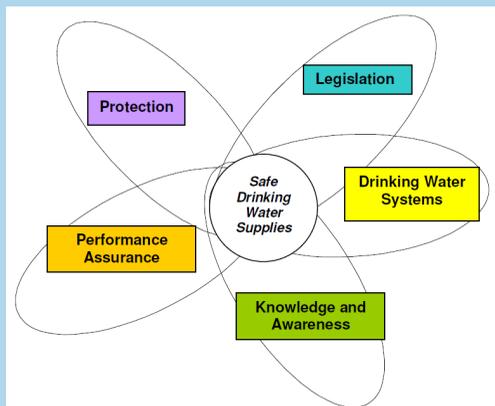


Photo credit: Donald Reid

Ultraviolet disinfection system, Camrose.

The remaining 500,000 Albertans receive their water from sources not covered by EPEA. The responsibility for making sure drinking water is safe for these citizens lies primarily with Alberta Health Services or, on Federal Lands, Health Canada and other federal agencies.

The drinking water program includes five key elements:



Legislation

Under the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*, approved waterworks systems – including water treatment plants, potable water storage facilities and water distribution systems – must meet specific design, performance and monitoring standards and produce water that meets all relevant quality standards.

Performance Assurance

ESRD issues construction and operation approvals only when waterworks systems meet the appropriate standards and guidelines for operation.

ESRD requires routine monitoring of waterworks systems and inspects these systems on a regular basis to ensure compliance with the relevant drinking water standards.

Drinking Water Systems

ESRD administers the Alberta Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Program to ensure operators are well-trained and properly qualified.

The Department assists municipalities to apply for funding to upgrade their drinking water system under the Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership Program and the *Water for Life* Program. These funding programs are administered by Alberta Transportation based on input from ESRD.

Protection

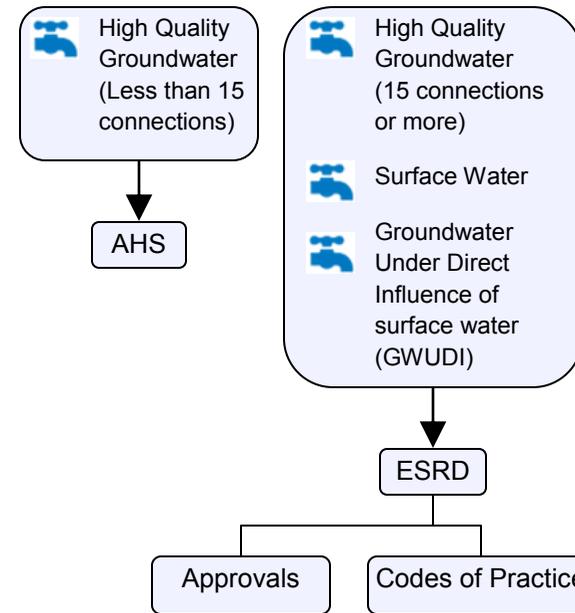
ESRD takes a collaborative and proactive approach to protect municipal drinking water supplies by working with owners and operators of municipal waterworks systems to prevent contamination of drinking water and to ensure emergency response plans are in place should an adverse event occur.

Knowledge and Awareness

ESRD works with the public, partners and stakeholders to promote and improve drinking water safety and delivery.

ESRD provides technical assistance and advice to municipalities through its highly qualified and experienced staff.

Regulation of Drinking Water Systems by GoA (simplified)



Current Initiatives

The Regional Integration Branch of ESRD is working on numerous initiatives that support safe, secure drinking water including:

Rolling Revision of Drinking Water requirements in the Standards and Guidelines for Municipal Waterworks, Wastewater and Storm Drainage Systems

This will ensure that Alberta Standards and Guidelines for drinking water are kept current and keep pace with changes in technology and the evolving challenges facing municipalities which provide drinking water for their citizens.

Information Letters

An effective process for distributing policy direction to stakeholders through a series of Information Letters, which simplify issues related to drinking water policy such as notices of new initiatives and clarification of existing policies, standards and guidelines.

Drinking Water Safety Plans

A Drinking Water Safety Plan (DWSP) represents a system-wide approach to ensuring that the quality of water delivered to consumers is of good and consistent quality. A DWSP is based on a comprehensive assessment of risk factors that could adversely affect the quality of the water delivered to consumers, and sets out how risk factors are to be monitored and managed.

Additional Information

Detailed information is provided on the department's website (www.environment.alberta.ca) regarding a number of drinking water-related initiatives, including:

- Up-to-date drinking water quality information for individual municipalities through the Regulated Drinking Water website;
- Information on more than 600 municipal drinking water systems throughout Alberta;
- Drinking water certification program;
- Details of Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy; and
- Drinking water publications.



Photo credit: Valerie Nelson

Microfiltration membrane system, Devon.

Contact

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