



# WATER QUALITY ADVISORY, TEMPORARY CHLORINATION & WATERMAIN FLUSHING OLALLA WATER SYSTEM – EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 31, 2023

October 27, 2023

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The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) will be conducting a routine inspection and cleaning of the water storage reservoir in Olalla on Tuesday, October 31, 2023. In consultation with the Interior Health Authority (IHA), the RDOS will be placing a **Water Quality Advisory** on the **Olalla Water System** for the duration of this work. **The Advisory will be in effect October 31, 2023, until further notice.** Temporary chlorination will also be in effect during this time.

As outlined by the IHA, this **Water Quality Advisory** is required as there is some level of risk associated with consuming the drinking water but a *Boil Water Notice* is not required. The risk is elevated for people with weakened immune systems or those seeking additional protection and it is advised that these individuals use a safe alternate source of water or to boil water for all drinking, oral hygiene and food preparation/cooking purposes. Water should be brought to full boil and allowed to boil for at least 1 minute.

Temporary chlorination and flushing of the distribution system will also be conducted during the week. Residents may observe some discoloration or sediment in the water. If you experience dirty water, simply run your cold water taps only and/or garden hose until the water runs clear. Minimizing the amount of hot water usage will limit the amount of sediments that could potentially settle out in your hot water tank. Residents may also wish to isolate their in-home treatment systems until turbidity has decreased to normal levels. In addition, residents should check the water quality before laundering clothing during this time, to minimize potential staining or discoloration.

No interruptions of service are expected, however, the RDOS does encourage all residents to conserve water during this time.

The RDOS would also like to remind all business owners/operators (hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, wineries, stores, etc.) and public facilities operators that it is the responsibility of said establishments to notify their customers of this Information Notice.

For further information, please contact the Utilities Department at 250-490-4135 or toll free at 1-877-610-3737.

Thank you for your cooperation.

RDOS Utilities Department

## **SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING WATER STORAGE RESERVOIRS**

### **What is a storage reservoir?**

A storage reservoir is a large concrete or metal structure that is located at an elevated location in the community. Reservoirs provides storage for peak demands and fire protection.

For the Olalla Water System, water is pumped from the Olalla Well to fill the storage reservoir and when full, the reservoir feeds the distribution system via gravity.

### **Why is cleaning of the storage reservoirs required?**

As the water from the Olalla Well is not filtered, any silt and sediments can settle out in the storage reservoir and water distribution mains. Biofilms can also potentially develop over time. These sediments and biofilms do not pose a health risk but can affect the aesthetic quality of the water. To ensure that the highest quality of water is being delivered, periodic cleaning is required to remove materials from the walls of the storage reservoir and sediments that have settled on the bottom of the storage reservoir. In addition, draining of the storage reservoir provides an opportunity to inspect the reservoir for cracks, leaks or signs of deterioration.

### **What is involved in the cleaning of a storage reservoir?**

The reservoir has to be isolated from the distribution system and drained of all water. It is then pressure washed and flushed of any material. The final step is the disinfection of all surfaces through the application of a sprayed solution of sodium hypochlorite (liquid bleach) before water is reintroduced to the reservoir. A water sample is then taken and sent to a laboratory to ensure that the bacteriological quality of the water is not compromised. While many steps are taken to make the cleaning process hygienic, bacteriological testing helps to verify that no bacteria were introduced during the cleaning process.

### **Why is this Water Quality Advisory being provided?**

Typically, a reservoir remains isolated until satisfactory bacteriological laboratory test results are received. This testing process can take up to three days. Due to operational constraints the Olalla reservoir cannot be removed from service for the time required for the laboratory to process the samples. The Interior Health Authority was consulted on this issue and it was decided that a **Water Quality Advisory** be issued. This Advisory provides the opportunity for people that are seeking additional protection (such as those with health concerns) to make an informed decision regarding the steps they wish to take to safeguard their health. In addition, this Notice prevents the need for any planned water service interruptions to residences. The RDOS would like to encourage all customers to conserve water during this time.