

# Drinking Water Quality Frequently Asked Questions

*What are the water advisory levels and which one is the City utility currently on?*

The City water utility is currently on a **Water Quality Advisory**.

There are three levels of alerts:

**Water Quality Advisory** is the first advisory level and is used in situations where the public health threat posed by the water supply system is **modest** and actions can be taken to reduce the risks through means other than requiring a Boil Water Notice or Do Not Use Water Notice.

**Boil Water Notice** is the next level and is issued when the public health threat posed by water is **significant** and the nature of the threat is one that can be effectively addressed through boiling of the water.

**Do Not Use Notice** is used in more severe situations where a significant public health threat exists in relation to the water supply system, and the threat cannot be adequately addressed through a Water Quality Advisory or Boil Water Notice.

**How do I know if I'm on the City of Kelowna water utility?**

The City of Kelowna water utility is one of five water providers operating within municipal boundaries and currently serves approximately 60,000 customers. Find out which water provider you or your business is on by using the [Find Your Water Provider map](#).

**Do I need to boil my water under a Water Quality Advisory?**

Interior Health Authority makes the following recommendations for a Water Quality Advisory:

**Who should take precaution**

- People with weakened immune systems or chronic illnesses
- People under 12 and over 65 years of age
- People wishing to take additional protection

**How to take precaution**

- Boil Water for one minute
- Use filtered or distilled water
- Use an alternative water resources (e.g. bottled water)

**When will the advisory be lifted?**

Testing will continue on a frequent basis until we are able to ensure that we are operating well within Drinking Water and IHA guidelines. At that time IHA will determine whether the advisory can be lifted.



**What caused the Water Quality Advisory?**

High water levels and flooding has resulted in increased sediment flowing out of many of Kelowna's creeks and stream. This has caused an elevation in turbidity levels at water intakes.

*The latest testing shows that turbidity levels on the City water utility are measuring between 1.0 and 1.5 NTU.*

Turbidity levels are measured according to the following index:

**GOOD - < 1 NTU**

It is recommended that newborns and people with compromised immune systems drink boiled water or a safe alternative if they are served by an unfiltered water source.

**FAIR - 1 - 5 NTU**

It is recommended that children, the elderly, people with compromised immune systems and anyone seeking additional protection drink boiled water or a safe alternative.

**POOR - > 5 NTU**

It is recommended that all users drink boiled water or a safe alternative. Tap water intended for drinking should be brought to a rolling boil for at least one minute.

We have tested and will continue to test for a comprehensive list of contaminants in addition to turbidity and bacteria flowing into the Lake through creeks and tributaries in the Kelowna boundary as well at our intake sites.

Other than turbidity, there is no indication of chemical parameters that exceeds any health related concentration limits according to the Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines.



## Where does the City get its water from?

Okanagan Lake is the water source for our water utility. Rarely does the utility's turbidity level go above 1 NTU. The Water Quality Advisory currently in place is the first time the City has needed to issue a water quality notification in 21 years.

## How does the City water utility test for water quality?

Trained technicians perform more than 5,000 individual water quality tests each month on source water and water in the distribution system. Source water is monitored 24 hours a day using computerized sampling equipment. Any significant change in pH, turbidity or temperature triggers a response plan that includes further detailed testing and customer notification.

## What is turbidity?

Turbidity is a water quality term that refers to fine suspended particles of clay, silt, organic and inorganic matter, plankton and other microscopic organisms that are picked up by water as it passes through a watershed. We measure turbidity levels on an ongoing basis.

## I have an at-home water filtration system; will that help?

There are numerous types of at-home water filtration systems and we are unable to confirm if a specific type will effectively filter water to a water quality that you may need. We still advise that you take necessary precautions as outlined by Interior Health recommendations to ensure water quality.

### *As a business owner, what can I do to inform my customers if a Water Quality Advisory is in place?*

All businesses within the City water utility are required to post notifications at all tap and sink locations for the duration of the Advisory. A [printer friendly \(8.5 x 11\) sign](#) has been created to provide your customers and staff with proper direction. Food establishments seeking further direction should refer to [Interior Health guidelines](#).

### **Water Quality Advisory in Effect**

ISSUED: May 11, 2017

Customers and staff are advised that consuming/using water from this source may pose a modest health risk.

#### *Interior Health Authority's recommendations for a Water Quality Advisory:*

##### Who should take precaution

- ▶ People with weakened immune systems or chronic illnesses
- ▶ People under 12 and over 65 years of age
- ▶ People wishing for additional protection

##### How to take precaution

- ▶ Boil water for one minute, then store in clean covered containers in your refrigerator. Be sure water is cool before drinking to avoid burns or scalds.
- ▶ Use filtered or distilled water
- ▶ Use an alternative water resource (e.g. bottled water)

##### Additional Information

Online [kelowna.ca/water](http://kelowna.ca/water)  
Water Quality Hotline 250-469-8475



e-Subscribe for Water Notices at [kelowna.ca](mailto:kelowna@kelowna.ca)