

MEMORANDUM

TO: Community and Health Services Committee Members

FROM: Adelina Urbanski, Commissioner of Community and Health Services
Dr. Karim Kurji, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: February 8, 2012

RE: **Risk Categorization of Small Drinking Water Systems**

Small drinking water systems are non-residential systems and seasonal residential systems serving facilities such as churches, motels/hotels, community halls, arenas, trailer parks, and campgrounds. There are 309 small drinking water systems in York Region.

In 2008, responsibility for small drinking water systems was transferred from the Ministry of the Environment to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Public health units undertook risk assessments of these systems using a provincially-developed risk categorization tool. The tool, an algorithmic matrix in which each component carries a weighted value, takes into account the many factors that affect water safety such as:

- Source water (well, lake)
- Sample history (laboratory confirmed bacteriological water results)
- Treatment/distribution (UV, chlorination)
- Operations (complexity of system, training)
- Users (access to drinking water)

Based on the risk assessment, small drinking water systems are categorized as high, moderate or low risk. About 20% of small drinking water systems in the Region have been determined to be high risk. Many of the systems can change risk level upon satisfying requirements related to some or all of the components mentioned above. The accompanying presentation to Community and Health Services Committee will explain limitations as well as give a better appreciation of how risks are assessed by public health inspectors.

Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner, Community and Health Services

Dr. Karim Kurji
Medical Officer of Health
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