

Protection of Our Water Supply

Protection and enhancement of the water supply, a priority for the City of Parksville and the Englishman River Water Service and is reflected in the mission statement, “*An environmentally sensitive use of water to improve fish habitat and domestic water supply.*” To successfully accomplish this mission requires careful stewardship of both the surface water and groundwater sources. The ERWS water treatment plant supplies water to residents and businesses of the City of Parksville and the Nanoose Bay Peninsula Water Service Area.

The novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19, does not present a threat to the safety of the Englishman River Water Service treated water. The ERWS water treatment plant uses membrane filtration, ultra-violet light (UV) and chlorine disinfection. Benefits include reduced health risks and improved water quality. Membrane filtration removes bacteria and viruses naturally found in surface river water and the ability to deal with spikes in turbidity (muddy water). The plant employs a multi-step treatment process which includes filtration and disinfection to remove and kill viruses, including coronaviruses as well as bacteria and other pathogens.

The new water treatment plant which began testing in 2019, was commissioned in January 2020 and is well equipped to protect the integrity of the drinking water supply. Island Health issue operating permits to ERWS and we are in compliance with Island Health operating guidelines.

ERWS has many operating safeguards in place to protect the integrity of our water system:

- Emergency response plan for water treatment and water distribution systems.
- During the testing period, City of Parksville and Regional District of Nanaimo staff received extensive training and a Level 4 water treatment operator was hired to run the daily operations of the plant. In addition to the Level 4 operator, the plant employs one Level 3 water treatment operator as well as three Level 2 water treatment operators, all capable of providing coverage in an emergency.
- The City’s mutual aid agreements include operational support for the water treatment plant from neighbouring governments in the event of an emergency. This could include sharing of skilled/certified staffing for plant operations.
- Arrangements have been made with other mid-Island local governments which would allow sharing of qualified staff should there be staff shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic. CUPE 401 has agreed there would be no collective agreement barriers to facilitating this need should it arise.

For the assurance of our residents, the virus that causes COVID-19 has not been detected in drinking water. Conventional water treatment methods that use filtration and disinfection, such as those in most municipal drinking water systems, should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19.

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