



Dear Resident,

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) recently informed the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) of new direction that requires the SCRD to provide a Water Quality Advisory for the drinking water supplied to your home.

This is due to your water being supplied from a surface water source, in this case Ruby Lake. This water is treated with chlorine disinfection but is not treated with a second barrier to disinfection such as UV treatment. There has been no change to the water treatment process from previous years, only changes in VCH notification requirements.

The following is the formal water quality advisory from Vancouver Coastal Health.

Drinking water systems with a surface water source, like the Cove Cay water system are at risk of containing pathogens that can cause illness if untreated. The vast majority of these pathogens, like bacteria and viruses, can be adequately addressed using chlorine disinfection. Some pathogens, such as protozoan parasites, are present in surface water and are not easily disinfected by chlorine. For this reason, a second barrier to disinfection, such as UV treatment, is required for surface water supplies in British Columbia. The SCRD is currently working to confirm and design the required upgrades to the water treatment at Cove Cay and are working to have these upgrades completed in 2025. Given the time required to complete these upgrades, a Water Quality Advisory is being issued.

Understanding that the language in the Water Quality Advisory above is quite technical, please find answers to some of the more common questions about water quality advisories below.

What does a Water Quality Advisory mean?

A Water Quality Advisory means the risk is low, however some water users are advised take extra precautions when ingesting the water.

Who should take extra precautions?

For individuals with very weak immune systems or pregnant, the increased health risks associated with protozoa parasites can have serious, even life-threatening, implications which makes it imperative to adhere to this Water Quality Advisory.

What should these people do?

Water intended for the following uses should be brought to a full boil for one minute and cooled prior to use:

- Drinking
- Washing fruits and vegetables
- Making beverages or ice
- Brushing teeth

Alternatively, water may be obtained from another source which has been fully treated (e.g. commercially bottled water).

What is being done to improve treatment for Cove Cay water supply?

A project is underway to confirm and design the required upgrades to the water treatment at Cove Cay. The construction of these upgrades will be completed in 2025.

Why is this being done now, why has it not been in place before?

Water system across VCH in this situation (with surface water and only one form of treatment) have been requested to issue Water Quality Advisories for users on these systems.

In recent years, there has been a push from VCH's Regional Water Safety Committee for consistency of application of Water Quality Advisories. This undertaking was done in consultation and review by VCH Medical Health Officers. Issuance of Water Quality Advisories under these circumstances is widely considered a best practice in risk management.

I have questions, who can I reach out to?

SCRD staff and VCH will host an online information session related to this Water Quality Advisory where residents can ask questions. Details on this session can be found below.

Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024

Time: 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

A link to join the meeting will be available at www.scrd.ca and at www.scrd.ca/water prior to the meeting taking place.

You can also reach out via email to infrastructure@scrd.ca and/or darren.molder@vch.ca should you have any immediate questions.

Further information and advice can be found at <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/waterborne-infections-british-columbia>.

Sunshine Coast Regional District

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