

## **Port Stanley & the Safety of Your Drinking Water**

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Recent articles have raised questions about the quality of drinking water, referring to a “toxic plume” that may be impacting the water intake for the Elgin Area water treatment plant, which supplies drinking water to area municipalities including south-London. Despite the concerns raised, residents should be confident that the quality of their drinking water meets the most stringent quality controls. Contaminants cited in recent articles about Port Stanley harbour are not found in the raw water at the water intake in Lake Erie based on regular and ongoing testing, nor are they detected in treated drinking water supplied to area municipalities.

Water quality sampling in this system exceeds the sampling requirements of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, which regulates all municipal water systems. In addition to more than 1,500 samples for 195 parameters by the Ministry of the Environment, the Elgin Area Water Supply System took an additional 1,213 samples during 2008 for 72 water quality parameters, including microbiological indicators and chlorine residuals, as well as various organic and inorganic contaminants, pesticides, metals, and many other chemical indicators. Testing conducted for this facility has confirmed that contaminant levels of various compounds including arsenic, mercury, PCBs, benzo(a)pyrene, benzene, toluene and selenium were not detectable in the treated drinking water. At a minimum, more than 2,500 water quality tests are conducted over the course of a year by an independent accredited laboratory for various water quality parameters, not including quality tests conducted by the onsite plant operators every four hours.

In addition to this regulated testing, the Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System continually monitors the water quality throughout the treatment process using computerized analyzers, as well as the onsite operational sampling conducted every four hours. As a pilot site for the development of the Ontario’s Drinking Water Quality Management System, the Elgin Area Supply System is among some of the first water systems in Ontario that will undergo an audit in order to receive accreditation under the new program.

As long as a water system takes water out of the Great Lake (or from a well system) there is the ‘potential’ for risks. Design and operation of the Elgin Water Treatment Plant uses a multi-barrier approach to protect against those risks. The Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System continues to work with the Lake Erie Source Water Protection Region, conservation authorities and area municipalities to identify and reduce risks to the water system. At present, technical assessments conducted for the development of a source water protection plan under the *Clean Water Act* suggest that Port Stanley harbour does not pose a significant risk to the Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System.

The Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System services the communities of St. Thomas, London, Aylmer, Bayham, Central Elgin, Malahide and Southwold from a water treatment plant located east of the village of Port Stanley. The plant has a treatment capacity of 90 million litres per day (20 million Imperial gallons per day) and serves a population of approximately 100,000 people. At a daily cost of approximately 75 cents — less than the average cost of a small bottle of water — London and area households have access to some of the world’s most reliable, high quality abundance of water.

For more information about the Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System visit [www.watersupply.london.ca](http://www.watersupply.london.ca).

For more information about source water protection and the Lake Erie Source Protection Region visit <http://www.sourcewater.ca>.