



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF WOOD BUFFALO

COMMUNITY NOTICE

March 9, 2023

Update on Fort Chipewyan Water Treatment Plant

Preliminary test results confirm that water from Fort Chipewyan Water Treatment Plant is safe and meets all Canadian drinking water standards.

Preliminary results from recent testing have confirmed that the water produced at the Fort Chipewyan Water Treatment Plant (FCWTP) is potable and continues to meet all provincial and federal regulatory requirements. Receipt of the finalized testing results are forthcoming and will be shared with our community partners when available, and posted on the RMWB website at rmwb.ca/water.

Out of an abundance of caution, we will continue with the additional cautionary measures we began March 1, 2023. These temporary measures are being implemented in the short-term until further notice and are explained below.

Closing the Water Treatment Plant Intake

The FCWTP draws its water from Lake Athabasca. On February 27, 2023, the RMWB closed the intake to stop drawing water from the lake. Up until this point, the FCWTP had been drawing water from its source as per the regular water treatment process.

While this temporary measure remains in place, the lake intake will be operated intermittently approximately every two to three weeks to fill the three raw water storage ponds at the FCWTP. Once the ponds are full, the lake intake will be closed, and the FCWTP will treat and test this water. We will continue to test at the raw water intake, which is pumped to the storage ponds.

Water processing and use is not always a linear flow so it can be hard to provide an exact estimate on days of water supply remaining. When all storage ponds are full, based on FCWTP data for water consumption, we have upwards of three weeks capacity. It takes four to five days to fill all the storage ponds.

Enhanced Testing on Raw Water and Potable Water

The Municipality will continue with the enhanced testing of the raw water diverted from the lake and monitoring of potable water for the community until further notice. This enhanced testing will include sampling on a weekly basis of the treated water, and every two weeks at the intake. Delay between results and sampling





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is approximately 7-10 days, which is the timeline for lab processing. The water quality standard used to compare the results is Health Canada's Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality (GCDWQ).

Regular Testing at the Fort Chipewyan Water Treatment Plant

The FCWTP conducts expanded testing at least twice per year as a requirement of the provincial operating approval. Results from the previous three cycles (July 7, 2022, December 14, 2022, and January 23, 2023) and preliminary results from the latest modified event on March 1, 2023, have indicated the water supply remains safe and potable.

Given these results, we are confident that the raw water at the FCWTP intake and storage ponds does not contain any contaminants and the water is safe for normal treatment, distribution and consumption.

Working with other agencies

The Municipality has had discussions with the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER), Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (AEPA), and Imperial Oil over the last several days.

Since our enhanced testing is focused on the FCWTP, we have requested sampling data from AEPA monitoring stations in the area, and any other sampling data from the Athabasca River and Lake Athabasca, as they are the agency that monitors those areas. We have also requested increased monitoring by AEPA.

Will another source of water, such as bottled water, be provided?

All test sampling we have taken at the raw water intake and in the storage ponds shows there is no contamination and the treated water meets or exceeds all regulatory requirements and is safe for consumption. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and internally explore contingency plans that can be quickly implemented should the situation change.

Plans during the snow melt

It is normal practice for the Municipality to close the intake during the freshet, or the spring snow melt, and when the flow on the Athabasca River is very high.





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Updates Online

We will continue to share information as it becomes available.

These notices will be posted on our website at rmwb.ca/water, as will finalized water test results when they are available. Users may subscribe to this page so they are notified when the page is updated.

Additionally, discussions are ongoing to coordinate an in-person community update.

Ensuring the clean water supply in Fort Chipewyan is our top priority, and we take this situation very seriously. The tap water remains safe to use, and additional testing will remain ongoing until this situation resolves.

