
Cobble Hill Improvement District

P.O. Box 27 | Cobble Hill, BC V0R 1L0 | Bus: (250) 701-5193 | Fax: (250) 743-8821 | 1979CHID@gmail.com

July 24, 2020

BOIL WATER ADVISORY LIFTED

The Vancouver Island Health Authority has lifted a Boil Water Advisory for the Cobble Hill Improvement District (CHID) water system. The advisory was lifted after two separate test results showed the water supply meets or exceeds provincial standards. Effective immediately, CHID residents and businesses can now drink and cook with tap water.

As reported in the July 23, 2020, update, the advisory was issued due to a potential cross-contamination between Village reclaimed water and the CHID potable water supply. The Board of Trustees is pleased to report that the water sample test results demonstrate that reclaimed water did not enter the potable water system, and that the water quality was never compromised. Please refer to test results posted below this notice.

Background:

The CVRD's Park on the west side of the railway tracks in Cobble Hill Village is normally irrigated in the summertime with re-claimed water from the Cobble Hill Village wastewater treatment system. The treatment system is rated at class "A" which is the highest in BC and the resulting water is visually indistinguishable from ordinary tap water. It is then treated with chlorine and stored to ensure the resulting "re-claimed" water is safe to spray in the community. From time to time there are reasons why Parks staff may choose to switch from the re-claimed water to potable water from the Cobble Hill Improvement District.

When this phase of the reclaimed water irrigation system was installed it was equipped with a fail-safe system that involved the physical removal and switching of a pipe section to switch the system from re-claimed water to CHID water. In the many years of service there has never been a problem with this system. However, when the recent second phase of the reclaimed irrigation system was installed for use at the cenotaph and Cobble Hill Commons the contractor installed a system that depended on correct procedures being followed which had not yet been accepted and commissioned for use by the CVRD. This left the system vulnerable to human error.

Unfortunately, as a result of human error, on Wednesday July 22, 2020, valves were turned that allowed contact between the CHID system and the reclaimed water system. However, due to the higher pressure in the CHID system and a backflow preventer being in place, flow only went from the CHID system into the reclaimed system and not the other way. This together with the fact that the reclaimed water is disinfected with chlorine greatly reduced any risk from this event. Regardless, in consideration of public health, precautionary measures were taken and it was agreed that a Boil Water Advisory be implemented and communicated to the users of the water system.

Staff from CHID immediately disconnected the community water from the irrigation system so a repeat of this event is not possible until the fail-safe mechanism can be properly installed. A site meeting was held the next day to discuss these plans. CHID's engineer will work closely with CVRD while this work is implemented, and will be on-site for inspections.

During the incident, CHID posted signage strategically throughout the community, it utilized email communication, telephone notification, its website, and social media to keep residents informed with updates on the Boil Water Advisory.

As a small community, CHID also depended heavily upon word-of-mouth and sincerely thanks those residents who picked up the phone, or visited a neighbour or family member, or sent an email to their distribution list to inform them of the advisory. In future, CHID hopes to work more closely with the community organizations to help advise local residents.

The Board of Trustees is now reviewing its Emergency Response Plan, and will look closely at its overall communications plan for informing the public in the quickest and most thorough way possible.

It is critical that CHID have up-to-date contact information for all users of the system. Please click on the red "ALERT" button on the home page of the Cobble Hill Improvement District website, www.cobblehillimprovementdistrict.com, complete the emergency response form and "SUBMIT" it to CHID directly from the website.

HELP US HELP YOU BE SAFE!

Sincerely,

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Cobble Hill Improvement District

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T 250.701.5193 | F 250.743.8821