



ALBERTA
HEALTH

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Edmonton-Rutherford*

City of Brooks

MAR 06 2013

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His Worship Martin Shields
Mayor
City of Brooks
201 - 1 Avenue West
PO Bag 880
Brooks, Alberta
T1R 0Z6

Dear Mayor Shields:

Honourable Doug Griffiths, Minister of Municipal Affairs, forwarded your letter of January 16, 2013, regarding the use of chloramines as an approved drinking water treatment method. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

Our drinking water comes from nature where it is exposed to a number of potential contaminants, such as minerals, silt, vegetation, fertilizers and agricultural runoff. While some of these materials are harmless, some can cause serious health problems, which can be especially troubling to the most vulnerable populations — children and the elderly. The most significant health risks come from disease-causing bacteria and viruses.

Effective disinfection of drinking water is critical to reducing enteric illness in Alberta. Scientific data shows that chloramine disinfection is a safe, acceptable practice and that the practice of disinfecting drinking water has greatly reduced the risk of water-borne diseases. Only chloramines, which are widely used in distribution systems where water must be piped long distances to different communities, are stable enough to protect drinking water from the growth of water-borne pathogens in these systems.

Health Canada recognizes chloramination as a safe and legitimate form of disinfection.

Water utilities serving Edmonton and area have been using chloramine for several decades, while the City of Calgary has been using free chlorine. In addition, many municipalities in the United States and Australia have been chloraminating for several years.

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Under Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy, our government is committed to ensuring Albertans have access to a safe, secure supply of drinking water. This requires disinfection as part of our multi-barrier, source-to-tap approach. Our government works cooperatively with other organizations, departments and agencies to maintain the quality of Alberta's drinking water supply. If you would like more information about our government's drinking water program, please visit www.environment.gov.ab.ca/info/library/8156.pdf.

If you have any further questions, please contact Dr. James Talbot, Chief Medical Officer of Health, at 780-415-2809.

Sincerely,



Fred Horne
Minister of Health

cc: Honourable Diana McQueen
Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

Honourable Doug Griffiths
Minister of Municipal Affairs

Honourable Greg Weadick
Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs

Dr. James Talbot
Chief Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Health