

February 6, 2023

RE: Davy Drive Drinking Water System

The purpose of this letter is to notify you that recent routine quarterly testing of drinking water from the Davy Drive drinking water system revealed that Haloacetic acid (HAA) levels exceed the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard of 80 µg/L expressed as a running annual average. Laboratory results detected an increase in the HAA levels during the last two quarters of 2022 which increased the overall running annual average to 87.7µg/L.

Haloacetic acids (HAAs) are a type of disinfection by-product that are formed when the chlorine used to disinfect drinking water reacts with naturally occurring organic matter in the raw water (in the case at the Davy Drive drinking water system, groundwater from the wells). HAA levels can vary over time when factors change, for example the temperature of the raw water, natural organic matter present in the raw water, treated water temperature and water storage levels.

This increase in HAA level does not constitute an immediate health risk to those who use the Davy Drive drinking water system. You can continue to use the water as per regular use. These results are being shared for your awareness and to provide you with current information about this increase in HAA levels.

This is the first time that the HAA running annual average has exceeded the drinking water quality standard for the Davy Drive drinking water system since the requirement to calculate the running annual average for HAAs came into effect on January 1, 2020. The annual average for 2020 was 69.2 µg/L and 61.9 µg/L in 2021.

The Township of Ramara along with its operating authority are working to optimize the treatment process and create an action plan to reduce HAA levels to meet standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002. Due to the complexity of the issue and the fact that sample results are averaged over four quarters, it will take time for the results to be below the 80 µg/l limit.

Chlorine is important in drinking water treatment for controlling pathogenic organisms that can make us sick. Drinking water that is disinfected with chlorine to kill bacteria and viruses such as E. coli and cholera is a benefit that far outweighs any potential negative health risks at the present time.

What are the potential health effects associated with HAAs in drinking water?

Public Health Ontario and Health Canada report that there are no known negative health effects associated with short term exposures to elevated HAA levels in drinking water based on current research. While there is data to suggest that drinking water with elevated levels of HAAs over the course of a lifetime may lead to an increased risk of cancer, short term exposure would not lead to an increased risk of developing cancer.

Can the water still be used?

You can continue to use the water as per regular use. No changes in use of municipal water are recommended at this time.

More information about water sampling and results, and HAAs in drinking water can be found on the Township's website at www.ramara.ca/drinking-water.

Further information on HAAs in drinking water is also available on the health unit's website at www.smdhu.org/HAA or by contacting Health Connection and asking to speak with a public health inspector, Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

Original Signed By:

Zach Drinkwalter
Township of Ramara
Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed By:

Charles Gardner, MD, CCFP, MHSc, FRCPC
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
Medical Officer of Health