

## Chapter 8: Water Safety

### Drinking Water

Child care centres must provide a constant supply of potable water and comply with provincial regulations regarding sampling, treatment, and reporting. Ontario's Safe Drinking Water Act and its associated regulations identify a child care centre as being a designated facility. Designated facilities provide water to people who may be more susceptible to adverse effects from consuming poor quality drinking water. Child care centres must periodically test their drinking water for lead content and routinely flush their plumbing according to legislation. These legislative requirements apply to child care centres on municipal water or a private well. Under the Act, a child care centre's drinking water is regulated by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. To be clear about your specific legal requirements, you can access applicable legislation at [www.e-laws.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.on.ca) or by contacting your local ministry office at 705-942-6354.

### What happens if the water is not safe to drink?

A Boil Water Advisory or Drinking Water Advisory may be issued by Algoma Public Health to any child care centre where the drinking water is deemed unsafe; this includes day cares on private and municipal water supply. If an advisory is issued, a Public Health Inspector will contact you and inform you what actions must be taken. If you become aware of any adverse drinking water incident, you must contact:

- The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Spills Action Centre at 416-325-3000 or 1-800-268-6060
- Algoma Public Health at 705-759-5286

### Have a Contingency Plan

Have a contingency plan in place for when you experience a Boil/Drinking Water Advisory, or in the event of a water shortage. A contingency plan should include:

- alternate child care sites (if the centre is closed due to a prolonged water outage)
- identify alternate sources/supplies of safe water (e.g. commercially bottled water or municipally hauled water)
- emergency kit stocked with a supply of bottled water, hand sanitizer, single-use disposable utensils and dishware, and disposable gloves

### Hot Water Temperature

The hot water temperature at sinks accessible to children should not exceed 49°C (120°F) to prevent scalds. Water at 60°C (140°F) can scald the skin in only 5 seconds. If the water in your centre is too hot, a mixing valve may be placed on the plumbing at the sink to ensure water leaving the tap is an acceptable temperature. It is not advised to place a mixing valve directly at the hot water tanks as they are recommended to be set to 60°C (140°F) to prevent bacteriological growth. Consult a professional plumber if plumbing interventions are needed in your centre.