

**Ministry of the Environment,  
Conservation and Parks**  
Drinking Water and Environmental  
Compliance Division  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
135 St. Clair Avenue West  
Toronto ON M4V 1P5  
Phone: (416) 314-6378  
Fax: (416) 314-3986

**Ministère de l'Environnement, de la  
Protection de la nature et des Parcs**  
Division de la conformité en matière d'eau  
potable et d'environnement  
8<sup>e</sup> étage  
135, avenue St. Clair Ouest  
Toronto (Ontario) M4V 1P5  
Tél: (416) 314-6378  
Télé: (416) 314-3986



**DATE:** March 24, 2020

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Drinking Water and Wastewater Systems Owners/Operating Authorities and Associations

**FROM:** Melissa Thomson  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Chief Drinking Water Inspector  
Drinking Water and Environmental Compliance Division  
(DWECD)

**SUBJECT:** Enhanced Measures to Ensure Continuity of Operations for Ontario's Water Systems

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The health and well-being of the people of Ontario is our government's number one priority. As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to evolve locally and globally, we have taken further action to ensure that the province's drinking water and wastewater systems continue to operate and provide clean, safe drinking water to the public.

Ontario has put in place a temporary emergency order for blanket regulatory relief for drinking water and wastewater system owners and operating authorities who may experience staffing challenges as a result of the outbreak. The order will provide flexibility to redeploy and employ qualified operators as needed to address staff shortages, reschedule operator hours and use operators whose certificates and licences may have recently expired. Our expectation is that system owners and operating authorities engage with their employees and unions (where applicable) to identify options that may work for all parties involved when scheduling adjustments and/or deployment are needed.

The emergency order also permits system owners and operators to temporarily employ certain qualified but non-certified individuals to perform operational duties, if needed. These individuals include knowledgeable technical personnel and supervisors, managers, professional engineers and operators who have retired in the past five years.

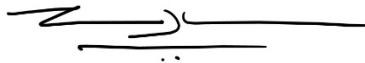
While the order is in place, systems can continue to submit statutory requests for relief to the ministry for consideration on a case-specific basis.

Ministry staff are here to support you during this difficult time. If you have any questions about these temporary measures, or any other matters, please contact your local ministry district office.

We ask that you inform the ministry's Spills Action Centre at 1-800-268-6060 or [awqi.reporting@ontario.ca](mailto:awqi.reporting@ontario.ca) if you are experiencing difficulties that may lead to a break in continuity of operations so that we can assist where possible.

The ministry takes the protection of Ontario's drinking water very seriously and will continue to ensure that public health and environmental safeguards will not be compromised by any of these extraordinary measures. As drinking water and wastewater system owners and operating authorities, you play a critical role within your communities. Please take care of yourselves during this difficult time.

Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melissa Thomson', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Melissa Thomson  
Chief Drinking Water Inspector  
Drinking Water and Environmental Compliance Division  
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks