



Investigation into issues experienced with Wetaskiwin's Water Treatment Plant complete

Friday January 7, 2022 (Wetaskiwin, Alberta) - The internal investigation conducted by the City of Wetaskiwin following malfunctions experienced at the Water Treatment Plant – which resulted in a community-wide stage 4 water restriction – is now complete.

In November 2021, Wetaskiwin's Water Treatment Plant experienced a shutdown which prevented any additional water being treated for human consumption, eventually leading to a very low reserve of potable water in the City's reservoirs. The City of Wetaskiwin partially activated its Emergency Operations Centre to streamline the City's response and help keep reservoir levels above the point where the water distribution system would depressurize – compromising the City's ability to deliver safe, clean drinking water to customers.

The investigation revealed several contributing factors that led to the Water Treatment Plant's temporary shutdown, including incomplete Standard Operating Procedures and Emergency Response Plans, a lack of employee accountability and control, and the mechanical failure of a system with no corresponding alarm. In response to these findings, Administration identified the following actions to be completed by early 2022:

- Review and update all Standard Operating Procedures and Emergency Response Plans.
- Ensure all chemical lines at the Water Treatment Plant have alarms to notify operators of issues before the system shuts down.
- Internally communicate the importance of notifying General Managers and/or the City Manager of potentially serious situations so Senior Administration can assist before things become an emergency.

"It's important that citizens have uninterrupted access to clean and safe drinking water, which is why the City took considerable steps to prevent the contamination of our potable water," stated Sue Howard, Wetaskiwin's City Manager. "While the cost of this preventable issue was high, the alternative would have been much worse. Controls are now being put into place to help ensure this never happens again."

Approximately \$185,000 was spent on contracted help, staff time, equipment, and water haulers during the City's response efforts. The table below provides a breakdown of these costs.

Item	Cost
Staff Time and Equipment	\$19,197.50
Contracted Help	\$35,000.00
Water Haulers	\$130,748.19
Total	\$184,945.69

The City thanks all community members for adhering to the stage 4 water restriction, and is immediately implementing the report recommendations.





Quick facts:

- The following public communications were issued during this event:
 - Thursday, November 25, 2021
 - 1540h - [A water conservation request](#) was issued by the City.
 - Friday, November 26, 2021
 - 1209h - [A press release](#) and [video featuring Mayor Gandam](#) was released announcing the mandatory Stage 4 water restriction. Members of the local media were also alerted to the situation and were asked to help spread the word.
 - 1722h - [An update](#) on the Water Treatment Plant situation was issued by the City.
 - 2145h - [Another update](#) on the Water Treatment Plant situation was issued.
 - Saturday, November 27, 2021
 - 1020h - [A press release](#) was issued by the City stating that the required repairs had been completed and water levels in the reservoirs were rising.
 - 1200h - [A video update](#) on the Water Treatment Plant situation featuring Mayor Gandam was released to the public.
 - Sunday, November 28, 2021
 - 2106h - [A press release](#) was issued stating the Stage 4 water restriction would be lifted at 8 am on Monday, November 29.

About the City of Wetaskiwin

Wetaskiwin is a secure, connected, and inclusive community, home to a diverse population of nearly 13,000 people. Located only 30 minutes south of the Edmonton International Airport, the City of Wetaskiwin provides a high quality of life through ample recreation opportunities, diverse cultural activities, and a modernized, business-friendly downtown.

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Media contact:
Ren Goode, Communications Manager
City of Wetaskiwin

(p) 780.361.4417 **(c)** 780.335.4061
ren.goode@wetaskiwin.ca

