



Standard of Care – Drinking Water

Operations Committee

April 17, 2025

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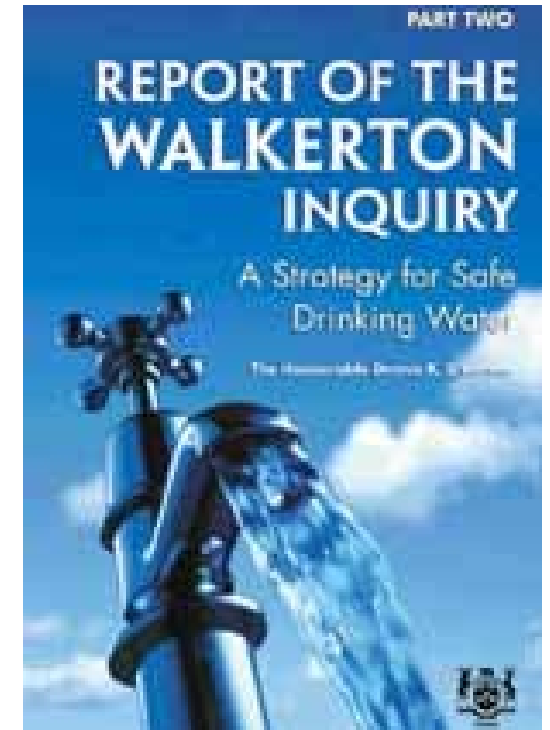
In the context of water management, the "standard of care" refers to the legal responsibility of individuals with decision-making authority over municipal drinking water systems to exercise the level of care, diligence, and skill that a reasonably prudent person would in similar circumstances, to protect public health and prevent drinking water hazards.



The Beginning – Walkerton 2000

Key Events

- Heavy rainfall and widespread flooding
- Nearby cattle farm, manure storage and field application
- Run-off and overland flooding
- Improper well construction
- Defective disinfection and monitoring equipment
- Delayed reporting
- Flushing spread contaminated water throughout the system
- Seven deaths over 2300 sick

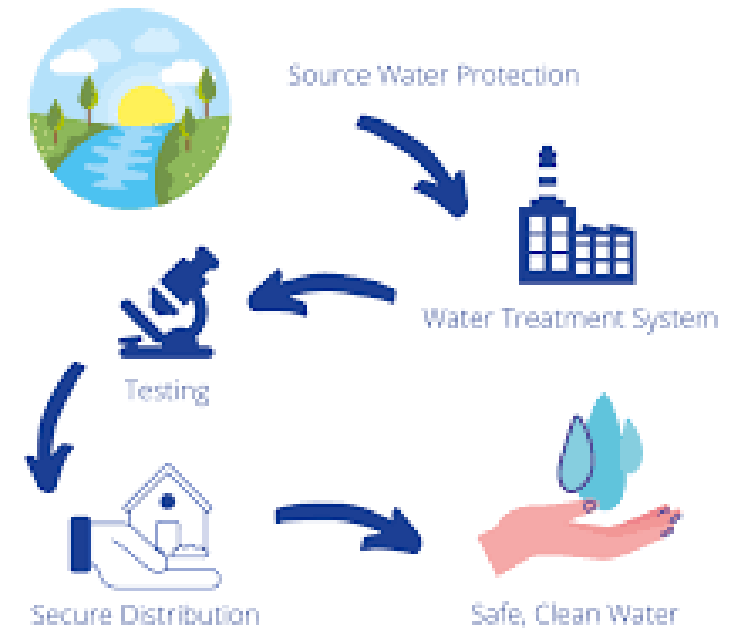


Contributing Factors

There was a multitude of factors that led to the tragedy including;

- Improperly constructed well
- Contaminated water source
- Inadequate training and education of public utilities staff
- Insufficient reporting requirements to the Ministry of the Environment

Multi Barrier Approach



Recommendation

- 121 recommendations implemented over the next several years (2002 – 2007) underpinned by three new Acts including Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water Act and Nutrient Management Act

Key recommendations include:

- New operator training and certification regulation
- Annual inspections/protocols
- Development of a drinking water inspection protocol
- Time limited Certificates of Approval
- Continuous monitoring of chlorine and turbidity
- Staff training and business process improvements
- Conducting random assessments of public health boards
- Development of the Response to Adverse Drinking Water Quality Incidents
- Improvements to our information management and technology
- Financial requirements for sustainability
- Licensing and accreditation
- Watershed-based source protection



New Legislation

- Safe Drinking Water Act
 - Section 19 (Standard of care, municipal drinking water systems)
 - O. Reg 170 (Operations)
 - O. Reg 169 (Water Quality Standards)
 - O. Reg 128 (Training and Certification)
- Clean Water Act (Formerly Source Water Protection Act)
- Nutrient Management Act
- Sustainable Water and Wastewater Act



Examples of Standard of Care

Although proving standard of care violations is challenging a couple recent high-profile crisis brought owners and political figures into question.





Questions?