

From: Jeffrey.Sunstrum
Sent: March 24, 2025 2:59 PM
To: Tracy.Allen
CC: Carla.Bohman; Richard.Thompson
Subject: RE: Water Testing in YG Buildings

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

74(1)(a)

Jeff

From: Tracy.Allen <Tracy.Allen@yukon.ca>
Sent: March 24, 2025 2:13 PM
To: Jeffrey.Sunstrum <Jeff.Sunstrum@yukon.ca>
Cc: Carla.Bohman <Carla.Bohman@yukon.ca>; Richard.Thompson <Richard.Thompson@yukon.ca>
Subject: RE: Water Testing in YG Buildings

74(1)(a)

From: Jeffrey.Sunstrum <Jeff.Sunstrum@yukon.ca>
Sent: March 20, 2025 3:14 PM
To: Tracy.Allen <Tracy.Allen@yukon.ca>
Cc: Carla.Bohman <Carla.Bohman@yukon.ca>; Richard.Thompson <Richard.Thompson@yukon.ca>
Subject: Water Testing in YG Buildings

Key Messages:

74(1)(a)

From: Tracy.Allen
Sent: March 29, 2025 11:38 AM
To: Jeffrey.Sunstrum; Richard.Thompson; Michael.Zuccarini; Hillary.Corley
Subject: Re: School Council Letters

Thanks Jeff. Please note that each letter should be tailored unique to the school.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Jeffrey.Sunstrum <Jeff.Sunstrum@yukon.ca>
Sent: Saturday, March 29, 2025 9:11:08 AM
To: Tracy.Allen <Tracy.Allen@yukon.ca>
Subject: FW: School Council Letters

Good morning,

I thought I would pass along the proposed outline for the letters for the school councils. If you see anything else that should be added, please let Mike know so he can update Richard.

Jeff

From: Jeffrey.Sunstrum
Sent: March 29, 2025 8:58 AM
To: Richard.Thompson <Richard.Thompson@yukon.ca>; Carolyn.Lewis-Shillington <Carolyn.Lewis-Shillington@yukon.ca>
Cc: Michael.Zuccarini <Michael.Zuccarini@yukon.ca>; Kirsten.Hulstein-Sylvestre <Kirsten.Hulstein-Sylvestre@yukon.ca>; Jane.Harms <Jane.Harms@yukon.ca>
Subject: School Council Letters

Hi Richard and Carolyn –

Before I am off, I thought I would propose an outline for the letters we have been asked to send to the School Councils. I would propose the following (understanding we likely can leverage existing communications and site created):

Jeff

From: Richelle.MacIntosh
Sent: April 1, 2025 9:21 AM
To: Tracy.Allen
Subject: RE: Water Quality Testing in Schools - DM Briefing Notes

These have been printed in 2 sizes (legal / 11x17). The same colored paperclip are the same tables. They are in your inbox.



Richelle MacIntosh
Executive Assistant to Deputy Minister
Highways and Public Works
T 867-667-3732 | C 867-332-3431 | Yukon.ca

From: Tracy.Allen <Tracy.Allen@yukon.ca>
Sent: April 1, 2025 9:15 AM
To: Richelle.MacIntosh <Richelle.MacIntosh@yukon.ca>
Subject: FW: Water Quality Testing in Schools - DM Briefing Notes

Can you please print this and all the tables

From: Michael.Zuccarini <Michael.Zuccarini@yukon.ca>
Sent: April 1, 2025 9:13 AM
To: Tracy.Allen <Tracy.Allen@yukon.ca>; Hillary.Corley <Hillary.Corley@yukon.ca>
Subject: FW: Water Quality Testing in Schools - DM Briefing Notes



Michael Zuccarini, P.Eng.
Director, Capital Development
Highways and Public Works | Property Management Division
C 867-332-1527 | F 867-667-5349 | Yukon.ca

Please be advised that all invoices for work performed up to March 31, 2025, must be received prior to April 7, 2025, for immediate processing

From: Richard.Thompson <Richard.Thompson@yukon.ca>
Sent: March 31, 2025 10:15 PM
To: Michael.Zuccarini <Michael.Zuccarini@yukon.ca>
Cc: Kirsten.Hulstein-Sylvestre <Kirsten.Hulstein-Sylvestre@yukon.ca>
Subject: Water Quality Testing in Schools - DM Briefing Notes

Hi Mike,

Please see my responses below. I can move this into an Information Note or into the Session Note if Tracy would like. A lot of school-related detail was removed when it was decided that EDU would speak to the schools and we would be available to speak to testing in our buildings more broadly. They are differentiated because of the number of youth occupants in the schools.

I'll also note that the majority of this information was already available online by EDU at Yukon.ca ([here](#))

Learn about drinking water quality in Yukon schools

We tested the water in Yukon schools: August to December 2024; and; in 2018, 2019 and 2020. Work to test school water in 2024. In August 2024, we made sure every school had one source of drinking water for every 10 students, on average.

yukon.ca

A paragraph on the previous communications that children are not at risk:

In any Yukon school, the best place to get drinking water is from the school's water fountains or water bottle filling stations. Water samples from these fixtures show lead levels that are below the Maximum Acceptable Concentration (MAC) for lead in the Canadian guidelines. Following the extensive testing to date, the Government of Yukon is confident that students and staff at Yukon schools are not being exposed to lead levels that would be considered a health risk. The Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health advises that incidental drinking of water from other fixtures with lead levels slightly above the drinking water guidelines presents no significant risk to health. Children drink water from many sources and the amount that they receive from these fixtures would not be enough to significantly affect their health or development. Regardless, as an added measure of assurance, schools are still directing all occupants to drink from the identified water sources.

What is the source we used that supports our requirements are to have one source of potable water:

The Canadian National Building Code requires one drinking water source per 100 students.

A paragraph that speaks to the methodology we followed and why:

During the 2024 sampling, a Random Day-Time (RDT) sampling method was used to test any fixture that had previously been sampled in 2018–2020. This method provides a sample designed to monitor the average or typical exposure to lead in drinking water in a population.

For any fixtures that were not tested in 2018–2020 (mainly fixtures in recently constructed schools), an investigative sampling method was used. This method requires that a plumbing system sit stagnant for 16–24 hours prior to sampling to allow for the largest amount of lead leaching and was selected by Education through consultation with Health and Social Services.

Highways and Public Works' regional Facilities Management teams supported the sampling of these fixtures in our communities.

How many fixtures were tested:

According to EDU, as of March 30th, 719 fixtures have been tested. This number is high because the decision was made to test all fixtures rather than primary drinking fixtures as per the guidance received by the CMOH and EHS.

Critical vs. non-critical fixtures:

A critical fixture is used for drinking water and food preparation. Critical fixtures include hallways drinking fountains, kitchen faucets in staff rooms, home education rooms, cafeteria, and kindergarten and grade one classroom sinks. Dental program sinks in schools were also included in this. **Please note** that the CMOH and EHS have advised EDU and HPW to avoid using the term 'critical fixture' with the public.

Work completed to date:

- During the summer of 2024, the results of the previous round of testing (2018-2020) were reviewed and of the now identified drinking sources that had tested above the updated MAC thresholds were isolated until they could be re-tested and, if required, remediated.
- For the start of the school year, each school had at least one clearly identified potable water source that was confirmed to be safe.

Mitigations and remediations:

- Highways and Public Works had lead filters installed on at least one fountain in every school in the Territory. These filters reduce contaminants beyond just lead. They are working as intended and are all testing below MAC.
- Any other identified drinking sources that were over MAC were replaced with a newer model faucet, supply tubes, and valves then were retested.
- Since the start of the school year, Highways and Public Works has responded to 36 work requests related to remediation work in Yukon schools. 29 of these have been completed and 7 are currently open. These remaining requests are related to sink side 'bubblers' and are waiting on the arrival of parts to repair the alterations to the cabinetry caused by this work. These bubblers are all isolated and have had their supply hoses removed so they cannot be used by occupants to access water.
- Other mitigations such as flushing prior to use are used in instances where a critical fixture remains stagnant for long periods of time between use (e.g. school dental program sinks). This direction came from the CMOH/EHS.

Future work and timelines:

All outstanding identified water sources are either flagged for remediation or receiving mitigation protocols. Attached is a breakdown of this work as of March 31, 2025. There is also a table that Education has posted [online](#) that has been flagged by EHS and HPW to be updated as the current fields used are misleading.

Future monitoring program:

Environmental Health has taken the lead on drafting the guiding conditions of a long-term monitoring program. This work will inform the frequency and timing of testing and is expected to be prepared for early June 2025.



Richard Thompson

Director, Facilities Management

Highways and Public Works

CONFIDENTIAL

Decision Note

2025

Water Sampling in YG Buildings

Highways and
Public Works

Request for Decision:

74(1)(a)

Current Situation:

- HPW, through consultation with Environmental Health Services (EHS) and the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), have identified a set of YG-owned buildings for ongoing testing. This list of buildings was developed based on industry standards and public health recommendations.
- Buildings that have been identified for recurring testing by our public health partners are:
 - Facilities frequently occupied by children.
 - Examples: Schools, day cares, group homes and youth correction facilities.
 - Methodology: Testing was specific to lead as this is the highest risk chemical to youth; all fixtures were tested.
 - Buildings connected to small water systems or 24-hour adult occupied facilities connected to large, regulated public water systems.
 - Examples: Buildings on wells, water delivery, continuing care facilities, corrections centre, and adult residences.

Methodology:

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Decision Note

2025

Water Sampling in YG Buildings

Highways and
Public Works

-
- Small water systems: chemical, physical, and bacteriological testing using Random Daytime Testing methodology.
 - 24-hour adult occupied facilities: select chemical and physical testing for drinking water as they are connected to large regulated public water systems using Random Daytime Testing for a select fixture.
 - Our partners at the office of the CMOH and EHS have recommended against regular testing at Buildings connected to large water systems used for program operations that do not operate 24-hours a day.
 - Examples: Jim Smith Building and Law Courts.
 - The Chief Medical Officer of Health has advised that, “there is no indication that [YG] should do any routine water quality sampling on buildings serviced by large drinking water systems.”
 - Environmental Health Services agrees that “buildings connected to large water systems that do not house employees or residents 24-hours a day do not require regular or extensive water quality assessments/”

Why is this an issue?

- There have been recent enquiries into how YG ensures drinking water quality for all employees/occupants in government owned spaces.
- Results to date are included in the tables found in the appendices section.

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Decision Note

Water Sampling in YG Buildings

2025

Highways and
Public Works

Options

74(1)(a)

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Decision Note

2025

Water Sampling in YG Buildings

Highways and
Public Works

74(1)(a)

Background:

- Drinking water quality has been a concern in schools and the interest has expanded to questions about what is happening in other buildings.
- HPW and HSS have been supporting EDU with the deployment of follow-up sampling in schools, after the initial phase was executed in 2018.
- Drinking water produced by Large Public Drinking Water Systems (ie municipal water supplies) is tested regularly to ensure drinking water quality conforms with public health regulations and the Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines. EHS and the CMOH agree that buildings connected to these systems that do not house employees or residents 24 hours a day do not require regular or extensive water quality assessments. This approach is consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions.

CONFIDENTIAL**Decision Note****Water Sampling in YG Buildings****2025**Highways and
Public Works

- HPW has been further developing a structured water quality sampling program to ensure we are complying with any standards and legislation.

Ministerial Direction - proceed with option:

74(1)(a)

Minister's Signature

Date

CONFIDENTIAL**Decision Note****Water Sampling in YG Buildings****2025**Highways and
Public Works

Appendices – Results of Water Testing to date

Table 1: High-risk buildings

Building Type	Number of fixtures tested	Number of failed fixtures
Group homes	14	0
Daycares	6	0
Youth Corrections	7	1 (now remediated)

Table 2: Medium-risk buildings

Building Type	Number of fixtures tested	Number of failed fixtures
Adult Residence	16	0
Continuing Care	9	0
Whitehorse Corrections	3	0

Session Briefing Note

Water Quality Testing in YG Buildings

Highways and
Public Works

Jan 15 Note:

This version has been sent to Melissa Carlick to be added to the Spring 2025 Session Notes folder. Please do not edit this version. Once it has been included in the folder this can be disregarded or deleted.

Session Briefing Note**FALL 2024****Water Quality Testing in YG
Buildings**Highways and
Public Works

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon prioritizes the safety of Yukoners.
- We are taking a risk-based approach toward water quality monitoring in our buildings to adhere to occupational health and safety requirements and ensure conformance with all applicable regulations/recommendations.
- Municipally fed water lines are tested at water treatment facilities and again at designated facility fixtures within the larger distribution network.
- Out of an abundance of caution resulting from concerns about lead levels in Yukon schools last year, Highways and Public Works purchased and installed filtration kits in drinking water fountains at all Yukon schools to ensure equitable access to clean water in these facilities.
- Highways and Public Works has also completed water sampling at day cares and group homes located within Yukon government buildings and the youth correctional facility.
- The Yukon government is now executing a broader water sampling program targeting 24-hour adult occupied facilities and buildings served by small water systems (e.g. wells or water delivery systems)

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The public may be interested in an update on water quality testing in all government buildings.

Session Briefing Note

FALL 2024

Water Quality Testing in YG Buildings

Highways and Public Works

Background:

- Highways and Public Works, with support from our partners in the Department of Education and Health and Social Services are progressing through the following work plan:

Building Type	Actions	Timeline
Schools (Phase 1)	Locations have been marked in all schools where students and staff can get potable water.	Complete
	Communications have been sent to school staff and partners prior to the start of school.	Complete
	Samples collected at water bottle filling stations in schools.	Complete
	Contract awarded for testing of water bottle filling stations.	Complete
	Contract awarded for sampling and testing of all potable water sources.	Complete
	Elkay filters ordered (for schools, daycares, and group homes).	Complete
	Results from the sampling and testing that occurred at schools' water bottle filling stations are being received and this data will further inform which fixtures need remediation. Every Yukon school has access to at least one water source that meets the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality.	Complete
	Signage is being updated above fixtures that been confirmed to meet the Canadian guidelines.	Complete

Session Briefing Note

FALL 2024

Water Quality Testing in YG Buildings

Highways and Public Works

	Critical fixtures requiring remediation to meet the drinking water guidelines are being replaced.	Complete
	Contract awarded for Elkay filter installation (for Whitehorse schools).	Complete
	Installation of Elkay water filters on fountains and water bottle filling stations.	Complete
	School water sample data analyzed by EHS/CMOH to determine next steps for follow-up action where required	January 2025
	Any mitigation/retesting required on identified potable water fixtures will be executed promptly following guidance from CMOH/EHS	February/March 2025
Daycares¹ and Group Homes (Phase 1)	The departments of Health and Social Services and Education are working to determine next steps for water quality analysis in privately owned daycares.	Complete
	A notification that water quality analysis will be commencing has been prepared to notify the occupants of YG-owned daycares and group homes.	Complete
	Samples collected at daycares and group homes.	Complete
	All fixtures conform with drinking water guidelines and will be retested annually.	Complete
24-hour Adult Occupied facilities and buildings connected to small water systems (Phase 2)	Highways and Public Works is proactively sampling water in 24-hour occupied facilities connected to large public water drinking systems.	January 2025
	Highways and Public Works is tendering for water sampling services to be carried out on all facilities	January 2025

Session Briefing Note

FALL 2024

Water Quality Testing in YG Buildings

Highways and
Public Works

	across Yukon that are connected to small water systems (e.g. wells and water delivery systems)	
Remaining YG-Owned Buildings	The Department of Highways and Public Works, through consultation with Yukon CMOH, HSS and other jurisdictional experts, is working to define any additional water quality sampling that should be carried out in buildings connected to already regulated Large Public Water Drinking systems. The Yukon government is not aware of any concerns.	January/February 2025

- The Yukon government monitors small drinking water systems, as these systems have the highest risk of not consistently meeting the drinking water guidelines, including for microbiological parameters.
- For these water systems, we follow the Environment Canada Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality. This means we complete:
 - o monthly bacteria testing at all locations on well systems that are groundwater under the direct influence of surface water, and therefore more vulnerable to contamination;
 - o testing for minerals in well systems when a new well is developed; and
 - o annual cleaning of holding tanks.
- The departments of Highways and Public Works, Health and Social Services, Education and the Public Service Commission are collaborating on creating a continuous monitoring program for water quality in our buildings.

Approved by:

T. Allen

October 23, 2024

Deputy Minister, Highways and Public Works

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

SPRING 2025

Water Quality Testing in YG-Owned Buildings

Highways and
Public Works

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon prioritizes the safety of Yukoners.
- Highways and Public Works has partnered closely with Health and Social Services to ensure we are providing clean drinking water in our facilities.
- Water quality is tested for a variety of parameters as per the Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines.
- If sampling reveals that a fixture is providing water that exceeds a regulated level, mitigation efforts are immediately taken to bring the fixture within acceptable levels. The fixture is then re-tested to ensure regulatory compliance.
- The Chief Medical Officer of Health and our partners at Environmental Health Services have advised that there are no immediate safety concerns related to the drinking water quality in our buildings.
- To ensure it remains that way, Highways and Public Works has proceeded to test buildings within our portfolio that house children and youth.
- Highways and Public Works tested drinking water sources at these facilities in March 2025 and confirmed that these fixtures are safe to drink from.
- Our government will follow the advice of the medical experts at Health and Social Services to continue monitoring for lead in these buildings as part of our ongoing water quality testing program.
- As another added precaution, earlier this year we also tested all facilities that house adult occupants 24 hours per day such as continuing care facilities.
- These results confirmed that the water in these buildings is also safe to drink.

Session Briefing Note

SPRING 2025

Water Quality Testing in YG-Owned Buildings

Highways and
Public Works

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The public may be interested in an update on water quality testing in all government buildings.

Background:

- Municipally fed water lines are tested at water treatment facilities and again at designated facility fixtures within the larger distribution network. Highways and Public Works has also established a 5-year water sampling cycle for all well and water holding tank systems which aligns with the recommendations in the Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines, in addition to:
 - o Monthly bacteriological testing at all locations on wells and water holding tanks;
 - o Chemical and bacteriological testing of water from well systems when a new well is developed;
 - o Annual cleaning of holding tanks; and
 - o Annual bacteriological testing of the water following the cleaning.
- The Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality introduced stricter standards regarding lead levels in drinking water in 2019. The acceptable limit changed from 0.010mg/L to 0.005mg/L.
- Work completed to date by the Department of Highways and Public Works includes:
 - o Collaborating with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Environmental Health Services to create a methodology and additional testing parameters for Yukon government buildings. This includes:
 - Creating a risk-based methodology to sequence and action work from our highest risk buildings to our lowest risk.
 - Testing has been completed in our buildings that frequently house children as they are our occupant group at highest risk.
 - These buildings include group homes, daycares and youth corrections facility.

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Water Quality Testing in YG-Owned Buildings

Highways and
Public Works

- Lead filters were installed at fountains in schools and work was completed in October 2024.
- Results for our testing of these buildings are providing water within the acceptable limits of the Canadian Drinking Water standards.
- HPW will continue to consult with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Environmental Health Services to ensure we are meeting our regulatory requirements.
- However, at this time there has been no indication of any concerns. We will continue to work with the Chief Medical Officer of Health on all water quality matters.

Approved by:

T. Allen

April 8, 2025

Deputy Minister, Highways and Public Works

Date Approved

Water Quality in Yukon Schools

Highways and
Public Works

Recommended response:

- The safety of our schools is a top priority for Highways and Public Works. We are dedicated to creating a secure environment where students can learn and grow.
- Over 700 fixtures have been tested across Yukon schools to date.
- All schools have multiple sources of drinking water that meet the Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines.
- Fixtures identified as drinking water sources include drinking water fountains, kitchen and staff room sinks, and dental program sinks.
- Test results from 2024 identified that 78 of the total number of fixtures tested were above the Maximum Acceptable Concentration for lead based on the new Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines.
- Fixtures identified as drinking water sources that exceeded the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality were identified for remediation.
- Remediation measures include removing 'bubblers' (water fountain-style attachments) from classroom sinks, replacing fixtures and upgrading valves as needed, installing lead filters on all Elkay water bottle filling stations, and implementing pre-use flushing protocols for Children's Dental Program room sinks.
- The Department of Highways and Public Works has completed or is in the process of responding to all requests for remediation work that we have received from the Department of Education.
- The Government of Yukon will continue to work with the Department of Education, Environmental Health Services, and the Chief Medical Officer of Health to remediate fixtures as they're identified. In addition,

Water Quality in Yukon Schools

Highways and
Public Works

an ongoing water quality monitoring program is being developed for all Yukon schools to guide ongoing testing efforts.

Additional response: Testing, Remediation, and Health Guidance

- In December 2024, the Department of Education completed comprehensive third-party water testing at all Yukon schools.
- The analysis of the results was completed in January 2025 and a remediation plan was prepared.
- Fixtures that are over the Canadian drinking water guideline's maximum acceptable concentration for lead are addressed based on usage.
- Where necessary, filters may be installed or fixtures will be replaced with new faucets, supply tubes, and valves.
- In some situations, classroom sinks that tested in exceedance of the guidelines will remain in use for hand washing or other education-related activities.
- The Chief Medical Officer of Health has stated that this approach creates no immediate risk to building occupants, even if this water is consumed.

Additional response: Flushing Protocols

- Dental room sinks in many schools were in exceedance of Health Canada's guideline for drinking water quality for lead due to their infrequency of use.
- On the advice of Environmental Health Services, the Department of Education has advised the Children's Dental Program to flush dental

Water Quality in Yukon Schools

Highways and
Public Works

room fixtures for five minutes prior to use on days when these fixtures will be in use.

Additional response: Ongoing Monitoring and Future Plans

- Environmental Health Services, in collaboration the Yukon government and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, is leading the drafting of a long-term drinking water monitoring program.
- This plan will include a comprehensive list of drinking water fixtures requiring ongoing monitoring and will define the frequency and type of testing.
- In May and June of this year, representatives from the departments of Education and Highways and Public Works will inspect every fixture identified under the long-term monitoring program.
- The long-term monitoring plan will be ready to share with the public at the end of June 2025.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- In the spring of 2024, levels of lead that exceeded Health Canada's Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality were discovered in some schools.
- There is access to water that meets the current water quality guidelines at all schools, although some fixtures are still under remediation.

Background:

- In 2017, routine work on the water mains at the Del Van Gorder Faro School required a chemical parameter test which showed elevated lead levels in the school's water.
- As a result, the Department of Education began testing all Yukon schools.

Water Quality in Yukon Schools

Highways and
Public Works

-
- In 2019, the Government of Canada lowered the maximum acceptable concentration of lead in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality from 0.01 mg/L to 0.005 mg/L.
 - In 2019 the Department of Highways and Public Works and the Department of Education worked collaboratively to test for lead in the water supply for all Yukon schools and then remediated where required.
 - In 2024, two students found elevated lead levels in the water at Del Van Gorder School in Faro as part of a science fair project.
 - On April 23, 2024, the water testing and remediation action plan was shared with the Department of Highway and Public Works, Environmental Health and the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
 - A meeting took place on May 27, 2024, where the departments of Education, Highways and Public Works, and Environmental Health, and Chief Medical Officer of Health discussed how Education and Facilities Management will manage to meet the Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines.
 - Weekly meetings continue to be scheduled with representatives from Education, Highways and Public Works, Environmental Health and the Chief Medical Officer of Health to ensure work remains on schedule.
 - Highways and Public Works contracted a third party to install filters at fountains in schools. This work was completed in October 2024. These filters are required to be replaced after every 3,000gal and will be an ongoing cost incurred by Highways and Public Works.
 - Education contracted a third-party contractor to complete compliance and monitoring testing in all schools tested in 2018-2020. This work commenced in October and was completed in December 2024, and is now being used to guide remediation requests and mitigation efforts.
 - During the 2024 sampling, a Random-Day-Time sampling method was used to test any fixture that had previously been sampled in 2018–2020. This method provides a sample designed to monitor the average or typical exposure to lead in drinking water in a population.

Water Quality in Yukon Schools

Highways and
Public Works

- An investigative sampling method was used for fixtures that were not tested in 2018-2020. This was comprised mainly of fixtures in recently constructed schools. This method requires that a plumbing system sit stagnant for at least 8-hours prior to sampling.
- This sampling method was selected by Education through consultation with Health and Social Services.
- Fixtures that exceed Health Canada's recommendations for lead in drinking water are assessed based on the intended purpose, location in the building, and previous testing results. Where appropriate, remediation work is completed, and the fixture is retested. In other instances, based on the guidance of Environmental Health Services, Education will implement a flushing protocol.

School	Fixtures that meet CDWG as of April 15, 2025
Nelna Bessie John School	1 fountain 3 kitchen 4 total
Ghüch Tlà School	5 kitchen 2 fountains 7 total
Tantalus Community School	5 kitchens 2 fountains 7 total
Robert Service School	6 fountains 3 kitchen 9 reverse osmosis 18 total

Session Briefing Note

Tab# 21⁰²⁸

SPRING 2025

Water Quality in Yukon Schools

Highways and
Public Works

Kluane Lake School	1 fountain 2 kitchen 3 total
Del Van Gorder School	9 kitchen 3 fountains 12 total
St. Elias Community School	2 fountain 1 kitchen 3 total
JV Clark School	4 fountains 4 kitchen 8 total
Chief Zzeh Gittlit School	5 kitchen 2 fountains 7 total
Eliza Van Bibber School	5 kitchen 1 fountain 6 total
Ross River School	6 kitchen 1 fountain 7 total
Khatinas.axh Community School	3 kitchen 1 fountain 4 total

Session Briefing Note

Tab# 21⁰²⁹

SPRING 2025

Water Quality in Yukon Schools

Highways and
Public Works

Johnson Elementary School	1 kitchen 1 fountain 2 total
Watson Lake Secondary School	6 kitchen 3 fountains 9 total
Christ the King Elementary	2 fountains 2 kitchen 4 total
CSSC Mercier	12 kitchen 6 fountains 18 total
École Emile Tremblay	4 kitchen 3 fountains 7 total
École Whitehorse Elementary School	8 fountains 2 kitchen 10 total
Elijah Smith Elementary School	5 fountains 3 kitchen 8 total
F.H. Collins	16 kitchen 6 fountains 22 total
F.H. Collins – Tech Wing	2 fountains

Session Briefing Note

Tab# 21⁰³⁰

SPRING 2025

Water Quality in Yukon Schools

Highways and
Public Works

F.H. Collins – Weight Room	1 fountain
Gadzoosdaa Student Residence	1 fountain 2 kitchen 3 total
Golden Horn Elementary School	2 kitchen 3 fountains 5 total
Grey Mountain Primary	3 fountains 1 kitchen 4 total
Hidden Valley Elementary School	2 kitchen 1 fountains 3 total
Holy Family Elementary School	2 kitchen 1 fountain 3 total
Individual Learning Centre	3 kitchen sinks
Jack Hulland Elementary School	2 fountains 2 kitchen 4 total
Porter Creek Secondary School	13 kitchen 8 fountains 1 camp jug fill 22 total

Session Briefing Note

Tab# 21⁰³¹

SPRING 2025

Water Quality in Yukon Schools

Highways and
Public Works

Selkirk Elementary School	3 kitchen 4 fountains 7 total
St Francis of Assisi Catholic Secondary School	10 fountains 6 kitchen 16 total
Takhini Elementary School	2 kitchen 4 fountains 6 total
Teen Parent Center	3 sinks
Whistle Bend Elementary School	3 kitchen 5 fountains 8 total
Wood Street Centre	2 kitchen 2 fountains 1 camp jug fill 5 total

Approved by:

Tracy Allen

Deputy Minister, Highways and Public Works

April 25, 2025

Date Approved

MEDIA REQUEST

Time/date received:	
Outlet, reporter's name and phone #	CBC / Elyn Jones / elyn.jones@cbc.ca
Deadline	April 17, 4pm.
Spokesperson	Madelon Wilson
Source of question/info?	Follow up to previous interview on April 4, 2024

CBC would like to do a follow up interview to discuss the test results.

Key Messages

- Lead in drinking water is a serious issue. Any time there is a concern about lead in drinking water, we act quickly to verify and address the issue.
- Since being alerted to this issue, the water taps have been turned off in the school, signage notifying students and staff not to drink the water has been displayed, and bottled water has been provided until next steps can be confirmed.
- On the afternoon of April 11, the test results from the three drinking fountains came back and found that two out of the three fountains met Canada's drinking water quality standards.
- However, the third fountain showed higher than the acceptable level of lead that is outlined in the recently updated guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality limits.
- To learn more, a water specialist will travel to Faro to conduct targeted testing of the one impacted drinking fountain first thing Friday morning.
- We have extended an invite to the science fair students to participate in the second round of testing so they can see the difference between a targeted test, and continue to update their findings to help inform a conclusion of their science project.
- In the meantime, we are going to conduct a further investigation into the root cause of these elevated levels and look into the school as a whole to gain as much information as possible and ensure there are no other anomalies.
- This will help us identify if any additional work needs to be done so we can address any and all issues at the same time.

MEDIA REQUEST

Possible Questions and Answers

TESTING QUESTIONS

What are you doing to address the third fountain?

- A water specialist will travel to Faro this week and will conduct targeted testing of the one impacted drinking fountain first thing Friday morning.
- We plan to isolate the fixture and branch line from the main plumbing line to determine the source of the lead, and to get to the root cause of the issue.

Are you going to do more tests? Will you test the whole school?

- As we were not anticipating higher-than-acceptable levels of lead in our tests, we want to make sure we are looking at the school as a whole to gain as much information as possible and ensure there are no other anomalies.
- Therefore, the specialist will also develop a comprehensive plan to retest the remaining of the school's water fixtures as a precautionary measure.

How do you conduct testing?

- We test each water fixture using a 3-step method:
 - o First we test stagnant water
 - o Then we test the water after a 30-second flush
 - o Then we test the water after a 2-minute flush
- Two of the fountains passed all three tests.
- However, the third fountain showed higher-than-acceptable levels of lead in two out of the three tests conducted. This means that when water was run for 2 minutes prior to testing, the results were within the acceptable limits.
- This discrepancy underscores the importance of thorough testing procedures and further investigation into the root cause of these elevated levels.
- Now that we have received acceptable results for 2 drinking water fountains, we will be turning those back on.

When did you last do testing?

- In 2019 the Department of Highways and Public Works and the Department of Education worked collaboratively to test for lead in the water supply for all Yukon schools and then remediated where needed.

MEDIA REQUEST

- In 2020 we completed remediation work in the Del Van Gorder School in Faro, which included replacing all fixtures and piping known to contain lead.
- Following the remediation, we conducted further testing to confirm the remediation efforts were successful and the drinking water was safe to consume.
- Since those tests were completed, the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality were updated which changed the acceptable limits of lead, so we are working with experts to determine a comprehensive territory wide testing plan, and any other mitigations that may be required.

Why doesn't the government test the water more often? How could this have come about?

- In government buildings, we follow the Environment Canada guidelines. This means we complete:
 - o Quarterly bacteria testing at all locations on well systems that are secure.
 - o Monthly bacteria testing at all locations on well systems that are groundwater under the direct influence of surface water, and therefore more vulnerable to contamination.
 - o Testing for minerals in well systems when a new well is developed.
 - o Annual cleaning of holding tanks.
- It's important to note that delivered water and municipal systems do not require testing by facilities staff or end users, as these systems are supported by Community Services or city officials, depending on location.
- In the case of Faro school, the water is sourced from municipality, who is responsible for quarterly testing.

What about other schools across the territory, do you have similar concerns?

- The Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality, have since introduced stricter regulations regarding lead levels so we want to determine a plan to test and ensure all of our schools meet these new standards.
- The Department of Education is currently conducting a review of its 2019 data to identify any additional schools that may require further testing to ensure alignment with these updated standards.
- We are working closely with experts including the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and ENV health to determine next steps.

MEDIA REQUEST

HEALTH QUESTIONS

How concerned should parents and students be?

- The Government of Yukon takes the health and safety of students extremely seriously.
- We want to assure parents and students that we have taken immediate action to address the recent test results.
- While we investigate further to gather more information, there is no immediate cause for concern.
- We are actively working to understand the situation fully, learn from experts and develop a plan for next steps
- In the meantime and out of an abundance of caution, drinking fountains have been closed off bottled water continues to be provided for the students and staff at the school while we work to find the best course of action.

What are the long term effects/risks to drinking water that has high levels of lead?

- It's important to remember that we often drink water from various places throughout the day—such as work, school, home, and restaurants. Therefore, the amount of lead in water from any single source might only be a small part of our total daily intake. However, it's crucial to reduce lead exposure from all sources as much as possible.
- According to the Chief Medical Officer of Health there is no short-term risk to health associated with water fixtures with levels above the national standards. National standards are based on exposure to lead over a lifetime.
- Children drink water from many sources. Drinking water from these fixtures would not be enough to significantly affect the health of students or staff.

What happens if lead is found in the water?

- Any fixtures most likely used for water consumption such as drinking fountains and kitchen faucets with higher than acceptable lead concentrations are isolated and identified as non potable water.
- This would mean we would disconnect the affected fixture and post "do not drink signs" up, like we did at Del Van Gorder School.

MEDIA REQUEST

- We then fix or replace the fixture or pipes as required.
- After that, we do another test of the water.
- Only once test results indicate safe drinking water is the fixture reactivated and signs removed.

When did you tell parents?

On April 16, the principal informed the parents by letter of the test results and that further testing would be conducted.

Who reviewed and approved this?

- ☐ ~~Manager, Communications~~
- ☐ Director, Facilities Management
- ☐ ~~Director, Policy & Comms~~
- ☐ ADM of Property Management
- ☐ DM, HPW

~~Krysten Johnson~~
Madelon Wilson
~~Aldous Sperl~~
Jeffrey Sunstrum
Catherine Harwood



Facilities Management – Property Management Division

Notice to facility occupants: Testing for lead in drinking water

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to inform you that staff from the Government of Yukon will be testing if there is lead in your facility's drinking water fixtures, such as kitchen sinks, bottle fillers and drinking fountains.

Lead is naturally present in the environment, including in the air, bodies of water, soil, and in some cases in food and drinking water. Long-term exposure to even small amounts of lead can pose health effects, particularly to infants, children and pregnant women. To safeguard public health, the Government of Yukon follows Health Canada's Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality, which set strict standards on the acceptable concentration of lead in drinking water.

The only way to determine if there is lead in drinking water is through testing. Regular testing is especially important in areas that serve vulnerable populations, such as children, to monitor lead levels and take corrective actions.

Please be assured that there are no immediate health risks. Even if lead levels are found to exceed the national standard, this does not pose a short-term health risk.

While testing is taking place, you can continue to drink the water from your facility. As a preventative measure to reduce potential lead exposure, you can let water run for a few minutes before you drink it or use it to fill your water bottle. If testing reveals a need for corrective measures – such as flushing the system, installing a lead filter or replacing a fixture – our team will promptly carry out the necessary work and post notices as required.

Thank you again for your cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Stephen.Morash@yukon.ca or call 867-336-1540.

Thanks,

Nick Akers
Superintendent of Facilities Programs
The Department of Highways and Public Works