



Tips for Homeowners with Cisterns

Know YOUR drinking water supply:

- Visually **inspect your cistern** on a regular basis. Check the following:
 - The soil around your cistern should be properly landscaped (sloped) to allow the drainage of melting snow and rainwater away from the collar of the cistern. Keep grass short around the collar.
 - Ensure cistern fill pipe and vent pipe are not damaged. The fill pipe should be equipped with a cover. The vent pipe should end in a downward direction and have a screen to prevent the entry of insects and small animals.
 - The manhole cover should be in place at all times.
 - All joints should be sealed watertight.
- Have your **water quality tested** once per year, or when you are concerned about contamination. Testing can be arranged by contacting your local Health Centre.
- Teach children not to throw objects into the cistern. **DO NOT ALLOW CHILDREN TO PLAY AROUND THE CISTERN.**
- **Do not allow animals** around your cistern. Clean up pet waste as soon as you can.
- Make sure your water delivery person **uses the fill pipe** to fill the cistern and keeps **the truck at least 10 feet away** from the cistern.
- The cistern should be *shock chlorinated without entry* 1 or 2 times per year, to ensure the quality of the drinking water. Entry into a cistern for the purpose of disinfection is not required.
- The cistern should be *cleaned and shock chlorinated* once a year or when there is evidence of contamination. This is to be done by a person certified in confined space entry.
- Practice **water conservation** to ensure that you do not run out of water between deliveries:
 - Repair leaky faucets or toilets as soon as possible;
 - Shorten the length of showers;
 - Turn off the tap when brushing teeth;
 - Keep a pitcher of water in the fridge to cool for drinking;
 - Fully fill dishwashers and clothes washers before running the load;
 - Collect rainwater for watering gardens;
 - Use water only when needed.

For more information about cistern maintenance, contact your local Environmental Public Health Officer.

Environmental Public Health Services
Regional Delivery Sector, Alberta Region
Edmonton Phone: (780) 495-4409
Calgary Phone: (403) 299-3939