

Excerpts from Fluoride Report, February 2011

A report to Lethbridge City Council

Submitted by Doug Kaupp, GM Water and Wastewater

How the fluoride was turned on:

In 1952, the Alberta government amended the Public Health Act and thereby dictated that decisions to fluoridate in Alberta be made by a local plebiscite. The Act required a two-thirds majority vote for implementation. This requirement was reduced to a simple majority vote by another amendment to the act in 1966.

After four previously unsuccessful attempts, the City of Lethbridge held its fifth fluoride plebiscite in 1974 in conjunction with the fall municipal election. With a slight majority of citizens voting in favour of fluoridation, bylaw 3236 authorizing fluoridation of the communal water supply was passed.

Date	Bylaw	For	Against	Rejected	Required
June 26, 1957	2230	38.49%	60.92%	0.59%	66.7%
June 7, 1961	2384	52.86%	46.68%	0.46%	66.7%
October 13, 1965	2602	42.61%	53.77%	3.62%	66.7%
October 18, 1967	2711	48.32%	50.05%	1.63%	50%
October 16, 1974	3236	50.26%	46.78%	2.96%	50%

The fluoride concentration regulations are founded on Health Canada evaluations of the minimum level to provide benefit and maximum level to manage health risks. The maximum acceptable concentration (MAC) for fluoride in drinking water set by Health Canada is 1.5 mg/L. The daily acceptable ingested amounts of fluoride from all sources (not only drinking water) are different for each recognized risk to human health. According to Health Canada, the lowest daily acceptable amount is associated with the risk of mild dental fluorosis and is 10 mg per day for ten years.

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How the fluoride might be turned off:

The requirement within the Public Health Act for a local plebiscite to implement or discontinue fluoridation remained in effect until the Act was changed in 2000. This is demonstrated by the City of Calgary holding a plebiscite on fluoride in 1998, yet on April 6, 2009 Calgary City Council voted on a motion to discontinue fluoridation in the absence of a plebiscite. That motion was voted down 7-6, in part because some aldermen felt that it was not council's place to unilaterally reverse a decision previously made directly by the community.

There are however recent examples of Alberta municipalities discontinuing fluoridation by a vote of their municipal council; Drayton Valley in 2008 and Bow Island in 2009. It is therefore left the discretion of City Council as to if and how the community will be involved in future decisions.

1. Bylaw 3236 authorizing the fluoridation of the communal water supply of the City of Lethbridge should be repealed.
2. Application must be made to Alberta Environment to amend our waterworks Approval to remove the requirements associated with fluoridation. The Director may require that public notice of the application be given thereby allowing any directly impacted parties thirty days to submit concerns in writing for the Director's consideration. This requirement can be waived by the Director.
3. Regional customers of our water system should be officially notified of the decision. The towns of Coaldale and Picture Butte will have bylaws in force requiring fluoridation as a result of plebiscites held in their communities.
4. In order to receive favourable pricing, the utility purchases the fluoride chemical in bulk, delivered by tanker truck. Therefore, we have storage facilities large enough that these shipments can be received with minimum storage levels to manage the risk of running out. The amount of HFS acid in storage on site can range from 3 to 20 tonnes. This represents between one and five months of supply. The operational preference would be to avoid the cost of chemical disposal by continuing fluoridation of the water long enough to consume the chemical inventory.

Full report at www.fluoridefreelethbridge.com/facts/Lethbridge_Meeting_re_water.pdf

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