

# WATER TALK

A Publication of the Halifax Regional Water Commission  
6380 Lady Hammond Road, P.O. Box 8388 Stn A, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 5M1 phone 902 490-4820  
e-mail: [Cust\\_Inq@hrwc.ns.ca](mailto:Cust_Inq@hrwc.ns.ca) [www.hrwc.ns.ca](http://www.hrwc.ns.ca)

## Why Is My Water Bill Increasing?

Halifax Harbour is one of our greatest natural assets. Residents have long made stopping the flow of raw sewage into the harbour a top priority.

In 2002, HRM Regional Council authorized annual rate increases to the Environmental Protection Charge (EPC) included on your water bill each year for five years to help finance the Harbour Solutions Project. The increases approved were: 2003/04 - five cents; 2004/05 - five cents; 2005/06 - five cents; 2006/07 - five cents; and, 2007/08 - nine cents. The total increase will be 29 cents per cubic metre over five years. March 1st, the last scheduled increase, saw the Environmental Protection Charge (EPC) rate on your water bill increase by five cents/cubic metre. A cubic metre of water is 1,000 litres or 220 gallons.

Each five cent increase will cost the average four-person household approximately \$13 annually. These costs are comparable to other municipalities across Canada.

Other charges on your water bill include (see chart on next page):

Water Charges – comprised of a base meter charge and consumption charge paid to the Halifax Regional Water Commission and approved by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.

Waste Water and Storm Water Management – covers the cost of administering and maintaining the waste water and storm water primary collection systems, i.e. local and trunk sewer systems.

Existing Infrastructure Charge portion of the EPC – covers the cost of operating and maintaining existing waste water facilities, large diameter sewer pipes and related infrastructure.

| <b>Halifax Regional Water Commission Charges</b> |  |
|--|--|
| Meter demand charge (5/8-inch meter)             | \$35.26 quarterly  |
| Water Consumption Rate                           | \$0.291 per m <sup>3</sup>                               |
| <b>HRM Pollution Control Charges</b>             |  |
| Environmental Protection Charge                  |  |
| 1. Harbour Solutions Project                     | \$0.47 per m <sup>3</sup> (as of March 1 <sup>st</sup> ) |
| 2. Existing Infrastructure Charge                | \$0.1804 per m <sup>3</sup>                              |
| Waste Water Management Charge                    | \$0.3286 per m <sup>3</sup>                              |

If you have questions about your water bill or water service please contact the Halifax Regional Water Commission at 490-4820 or on line at [www.hrwc.ns.ca](http://www.hrwc.ns.ca).

For more information on the Pollution Control charges call the HRM Call Centre at 490-4000.

## Harbour Solutions Project Construction Update

2004 was a year of major construction activity on the Harbour Solutions Project, and 2005 will be another.

This year will see work continuing and reaching completion on the Halifax sewage collection system (SCS) component of the project. Work on the Halifax wastewater treatment plant(WTP) site is continuing over the winter and is on target for a late summer/fall 2006 completion.

In Dartmouth, design work on the Dartmouth SCS is ongoing with some components nearing completion. Construction is slated to begin this spring. The Dartmouth SCS will be completed in the summer of 2007. Construction of the Dartmouth WTP will begin this spring/summer and be operational in the summer of 2007.

Work on the Herring Cove SCS and WTP will begin in the spring/summer of 2006. Herring Cove construction is scheduled for completion summer 2008.

Construction of the Biosolids Management Facility to be located at Aerotech Park will get underway this year and be up and running when the Halifax WTP is ready in the late summer/fall of 2006.

*P.S.* Did you know HRM currently operates thirteen waste water treatment plants?

# “Free” Water Testing Offer – The Commission’s Position

We wish to advise our customers that we continue to receive inquiries from residents with regard to companies offering to conduct free water tests to evaluate water supplied by the Halifax Regional Water Commission (HRWC). First and foremost, companies offering this water testing service are in no way affiliated with the HRWC and we do not condone this service. With no clear indication of what companies are testing for, and questionable procedures for sampling and testing, test results may not be meaningful. Although the test is being offered “free” these companies are selling water treatment equipment which is unnecessary for customers served by HRWC. In many cases the company does not leave a contact phone number or contact person to reach if there are any questions or concerns to be addressed. If you have any questions with regard to companies offering to conduct water testing, we suggest you check with the Better Business Bureau at 422-6581.

A recent study conducted by UC Berkeley, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suggests that there is no apparent protection to be gained from using an in-home water treatment device as long as the tap water comes from a well-run municipal water utility where the water exceeds federal quality guidelines. Such is the case with HRWC.

The Halifax Regional Water Commission also wishes to state that it is not necessary for individual homeowners served by HRWC to have their water tested, as we test it for you on a regular basis. Water testing is carried out as an integral part of the treatment process, and the distribution systems served by the Pockwock and Lake Major treatment plants are tested twice a week for bacteriological safety at forty designated locations. As a matter of fact, in terms of safety of the water supply, the test results for the last two years were the best on record since HRWC’s inception in 1945. Quarterly samples are also taken from the distribution systems and a complete analysis is carried out to verify conformance to the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality* (GCDWQ), as published by Health Canada. These tests indicate that the water consistently meets or is often better than the requirements in the GCDWQ. Tests are carried out by an independent laboratory with results sent directly to the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour to ensure due diligence.

For further information on water quality, please visit our website at [www.hrwc.ns.ca](http://www.hrwc.ns.ca) or phone us at 490-4835.

# HRWC Relocating to New Facility on Cowie Hill

The HRWC has outgrown the existing Lady Hammond Road facility that has been home since 1950. Operations (Halifax area) and Administrative staff will be relocating to a new facility on Cowie Hill Road just off North West Arm Drive in the Mainland South area of Halifax in June 2005. The building, currently under construction, is designed to provide additional and more efficient space for improved customer service and enhanced water system operation and maintenance. The new building, located on HRWC owned land adjacent to our existing reservoir, features many energy efficient and water conservation components consistent with our corporate mission of environmental stewardship.

All customer service activity currently handled at Lady Hammond Road will be handled at Cowie Hill Road after June 2005. Customers are reminded that in addition to our new location, bill payments can be made by mail, with our pre-authorized payment plan, internet/telephone banking or in person (cash, cheque, money order or interac). You can also pay your water bill at one of the following HRM Customer Service Centres:

*Access Halifax in Scotia Square Mall*

*West End Mall*

*Alderney Gate at 40 Alderney Drive in Dartmouth*

*Cole Harbour Place at 51 Forest Hills Parkway*

*Acadia School at 636 Sackville Drive*

*Musquodoboit Harbour strip mall, Highway 7 at Petpeswick Road*

## Hot Water Tank Maintenance

When customers call with a concern about the appearance of water in their home, the first question we always ask is, "is it in the hot water only or is it in both the hot and cold water?" The reason we ask this is because the condition and maintenance of a hot water heater can have an impact on water quality.

Water supplied by the Halifax Regional Water Commission (HRWC) contains natural minerals in low concentration. When water is heated and held for several hours in the hot water heater these minerals can come out of solution and deposit on the tank bottom. Should the mineral build up become excessive, it can mix with domestic hot water and possibly give it an undesirable appearance.

All domestic hot water heaters come with an installation and maintenance manual. Modern hot water heaters have a drain or flush valve located near the bottom of the tank and most manufacturers recommend a periodic flushing to remove accumulated sediment from the tank. Water heaters also come with a protective sacrificial anode to prevent the tank from corroding. Hot water heater manufacturers also provide instructions on inspecting the anode and recommend an annual inspection. Operating a hot water tank with a spent anode can lead to corrosion and premature failure of the tank.

All home owners with domestic hot water heaters should acquaint themselves with their hot water heater, installation and maintenance manual and perform the periodic maintenance as suggested by the manufacturer.

Water Talk is an information communication between the Halifax Regional Water Commission and its customers. Published at least twice a year, it will cover topics relevant to the operation of the water utility as well as other matters of interest. Your comments are welcome.