



Environmental Health Information Sheet: Drinking Water Quality

Introduction

The public water schemes in the Ashburton District require regular monitoring to ensure the water meets the requirements prescribed by the New Zealand Drinking Water Standards 2005. The Council's Environmental Services team is responsible for doing the monitoring and reporting on the results. The water samples are analysed in a nationally accredited laboratory owned and operated by the Council.

What are we sampling for?

The Water Monitoring Officer takes samples from various sample points around the district using a sterile sampling technique and transports the samples under temperature control back to the laboratory. The analysis of the water is a presence absence test for coliforms, pathogenic bacteria which can be harmful when ingested. The presence of coliforms can be indicative of faecal contamination.

Is your water safe to drink?

If any of the samples return a positive result for the test, the owner of the water scheme is notified immediately. In the case of the council owned schemes the notification goes to the water services section who direct their contractors to fix the problem. The cause of the contamination is investigated and remedial action taken to try and prevent the contamination from occurring again. The Ministry of Health is also notified.

The Council will also issue a boil water notice so that the contamination can be removed from the water before it is consumed. Three clear/negative samples are required from that water supply before the boil water notice can be lifted.

What if you have a bore or well?

If you have your own private water supply, the Council will not be monitoring it. If you would like your water tested, there are numerous laboratories which will do one off samples and they will be able to give you a full suite of parameters including chemicals and metals, which the council laboratory cannot do.

If you are worried about the quality of your private water supply and need further information, please contact the Council Environmental Health Officer on 307 7700.

