

## WATER QUALITY ADVISORY PINECREST ESTATES WATER SYSTEM

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Dear resident,

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) recently informed the Squamish Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) of new direction that requires the SLRD to provide a Water Quality Advisory for residents of Pinecrest Estates.

Your water is supplied from Retta Lake, which is a surface water source. In accordance with the province's Drinking Water Treatment Objectives for Surface Supplies in BC, your water is treated with two forms of disinfection: chlorine and Ultraviolet (UV) treatment.

The effectiveness of ultraviolet (UV) technology for treating drinking water depends on several key factors related to the quality of the incoming source water. One critical factor is UV transmissivity (UVT), which is the ability for the UV light to pass through water and inactivate pathogens.

Recently, the source water quality from Retta Lake frequently falls below the minimum UVT threshold required for the UV reactors to operate effectively. During these periods, the water still receives some UV exposure in addition to its regular dose of chlorine. However, there remains a small risk that some parasites, such as *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium*, which do not show up in routine bacteriological testing, may survive the disinfection process when UVT is low. Under these conditions, the UV treatment may not fully inactivate these target parasites.

Routine monitoring for indicator bacteria, including total coliforms and *E. coli*, continues to be conducted every two weeks and consistently shows no presence of these organisms.

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*The following is a formal Water Quality Advisory from Vancouver Coastal Health*

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*Drinking water systems that rely on surface water sources, such as the Pinecrest Estates water system, are at risk of containing pathogens that can cause illness if left untreated. While the majority of these pathogens, such as bacteria and viruses, can be effectively controlled through chlorine disinfection, some protozoan parasites, such as *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*, are resistant to chlorine. For this reason, surface water supplies in British Columbia require a secondary disinfection step, such as ultraviolet (UV) treatment.*

*Currently, the existing UV treatment system at Pinecrest Estates is intermittently alerting operators to low UV transmissivity (UVT) in the source water. While the Squamish Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) investigates and implements a solution to remedy this issue, a Water Quality Advisory is being issued for your home.*

## Q&A

Understanding that the language in the water quality advisory above is quite technical, please find answers to some of the more common questions about water quality advisories below.

### What does a Water Quality Advisory mean?

A Water Quality Advisory means the risk is low, however some water users are advised to take extra precautions when ingesting the water.

### Who should take extra precautions?

For individuals with very weak immune systems or who are pregnant, the increased health risks associated with protozoan parasites can have serious implications, which makes it imperative to adhere to this Water Quality Advisory.

### What should these people do?

Water intended for the following uses should be brought to a full boil and cooled prior to use:

- Drinking
- Washing fruits and vegetables
- Making beverages or ice
- Brushing teeth

Alternatively, water may be obtained from another source which has been fully treated (e.g. commercially bottled water).

### What is being done to improve treatment for Pinecrest Estates water supply?

The SLRD is actively looking into options to meet the surface water treatment objectives on a consistent basis. Options may include enhanced pre-treatment, installing a different type of UV technology validated for lower flow rates and/or lower UV transmissivity, or securing an alternate source of drinking water.

### Why is this being done now, why has it not been in place before?

Across VCH, other water systems in this situation (with a surface water source and only one reliable form of treatment) have been requested to issue Water Quality Advisories for users on these systems.

In recent years, there has been a growing effort from VCH's Regional Water Safety Committee to establish consistency of application for Water Quality Advisories. This undertaking is being done in consultation and review by VCH Medical Health Officers. Issuance of Water Quality Advisories under these circumstances is widely considered a best practice in risk management.

### Where can I go for more information?

Please ensure you stay tuned to (ENTER WEBSITE HERE) local media and look for signage in the community.

Further information and advice can also be found at:

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/healthfiles/hfile56.pdf>

### I have specific questions, who can I reach out to?

You can reach out to the SLRD directly by email at: [utilities@slrd.bc.ca](mailto:utilities@slrd.bc.ca)

You can contact your local Drinking Water Officer at [angela.whalen@vch.ca](mailto:angela.whalen@vch.ca)