

Frequently Asked Questions - Echo Bay Water Emergency

1. Why did the Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional declare an emergency?

The oil spill that originated at Algoma Steel quickly moved downstream toward our water intake on Lake George. The intake provides untreated water to our Environmental Centre which then treats the water and pumps it to our water tower before it is used by all residents that have water provided by the Township. The Emergency was declared as the Health and Safety of our residents is paramount to the Township, in addition to potential impacts to our water treatment plant.

2. Echo Bay's water intake is well below the surface of Lake George. How could oil get into our water system and drinking water?

The water current in the St Mary's River is very strong and any oil on the surface could potentially get mixed with the water at all levels of the river and Lake George so it presents a public health concern.

3. What are we doing to resolve the emergency?

The Township is currently awaiting the results of ongoing water tests all along the river and Lake George from Algoma Steel to the Township's water intake. Results have begun to trickle in, but both Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and Algoma Public Health (APH) will not give us the "all clear" message until the tests consistently show there is no public health concern all along the water system.

The Township hired an approved potable water truck from Sudbury and began hauling water from Bruce Mines on June 12th. We switched to hauling water from Sault Ste Marie on June 13th.

The Township has secured a second approved potable water truck from Southern Ontario. The larger truck is expected to arrive June 15th and begin hauling water on June 16th. Both trucks will continue to haul water until we no longer have to do so.

The Township posted an Emergency Advisory's on their website (echobay.ca), Facebook page and at key locations around the village in addition to handing out the advisory and talking to residents during the Family Festival on June 10th and at the Landfill on June 14th, 16th & 18th.

The Township is renting Emergency signage to be located on Highway 638 (just off Hwy 17A) and on Church St. at Bucci's (just off Hwy17B)

The Township will be conducting a mail-out to alert all village residents on town water with tips to conserve water during this emergency.

The Township continues to meet daily with agency experts from:

- Ministry of the Environment (MOE)
- Algoma Public Health (APH)
- Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA)
- Emergency Management Ontario (EMO)
- Canadian Red Cross

4. When will the emergency declaration be terminated?

The Township will terminate the emergency declaration when the MOE and APH advise us the water tests indicate it is safe to do so.