

Aqua 7 Regional Water Commission

Aqua 7 Regional Water Commission Update – March 21st, 2025

The Aqua 7 Regional Water Commission is providing an update to member communities regarding Aqua 7 operations, specifically related to recent issues experienced in the system and concerns that have been raised.

What is the Aqua 7 Regional Water Commission?

The Aqua 7 Regional Water Commission (Aqua 7) acts as the transmission agency that transports water treated by the Town of Drumheller to areas of Kneehill County, Rocky View County, and to the communities of Carbon, Linden, Acme, Irricana, and Beiseker. It can often take water one to two weeks to move through the entire length of the transmission line.

What recent issues have occurred?

Like all utilities systems, there are outages and disruptions from time to time. Recently, Aqua 7 has experienced more frequent issues with discolouration and sometimes an “earthy” type odour.

What causes these issues?

There are a number of things that can cause these issues. Minerals such as iron and manganese, dissolved organic substances, or sediment such as legacy manganese deposits.

Recent discolouration events in the Aqua 7 line have been the result of high manganese levels received by the Commission, as well as legacy manganese issues in the transmission line.

Odour issues have been caused by the presence of Geosmin in water received by Aqua 7. Geosmin is harmless and does not require further treatment from a health standpoint, but the human nose can detect it in the water supply at a very low level. Currently, the levels detected in the water supply can give the water an earthy or musty taste and smell. For more information on Geosmin, please visit: <https://www.calgary.ca/water/drinking-water/water-taste-odour-appearance.html>

How are these issues addressed?

Water is tested constantly to ensure that it meets all regulated requirements. If an instance occurs in which regulated requirements are not met, such as if manganese levels are too high, it is reported to Alberta Environment and Protected Areas and that agency becomes involved with testing and monitoring. Alberta Health Services is also involved in these instances and assesses whether or not there are health issues and if any additional actions need to be taken. If it is deemed to be a health concern, different tools such as a boil water advisory or order could be enacted.

When Aqua 7 receives water with higher manganese levels, some can be removed. Unfortunately, these higher levels, combined with legacy manganese in the transmission line, have still been present in a high enough quantity to cause discolouration. While safe to drink, it is understandable that users are reluctant to do so.

Over the past year, Aqua 7 has been investigating possible solutions to address this issue. To date, identified options have been financially prohibitive with no guarantee of success. As such, the Aqua 7 Board has opted to continue looking for alternatives. We are currently exploring different additional filtration options to alleviate this issue.

The Town of Drumheller has been working to rectify the presence of Geosmin in the water, which has also recently impacted their community as well.

Thank you for your patience and understanding regarding these issues and please know that the Aqua 7 Regional Water Commission understands the frustration that recent and more frequent events cause. We are continuing to upgrade infrastructure, as well as identify and implement solutions to minimize future disruptive events.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Haugen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Mike Haugen,
Manager, Aqua 7 Regional Water Commission