

Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), December 2021 – January 2022

No.	Question	Answer
1.	<p>Why are the wellhead protection areas (WHPAs) B (2 year time of travel), C (5 year time of travel) and D (25 year time of travel) oval shaped rather than concentric circles?</p> <p>What is the distance of each of these WHPA zones (2-year, 5-year, 25 year)?</p>	<p>Under the <i>Clean Water Act, 2006</i>, the wellhead protection area A is a defined 100 m circle. The zones beyond 100m from the municipal well are delineated through groundwater modelling based on the local conditions such as the types of rock and soil, thickness of aquifer, slopes, etc. The groundwater flows at different speeds as it travels through different materials towards the well and this generates areas that are of a different shape and length.</p> <p>The modelling follows a technical framework in place under the <i>Clean Water Act, 2006</i>.</p>
2.	<p>Does each property have a vulnerability score?</p>	<p>The vulnerability scores are assigned to the drinking water protection zones, per technical methods specified under the <i>Clean Water Act, 2006</i>. The scores are not assigned at a property scale. The property might overlap 1 or 2 scores depending on the underlying science and other factors. The underlying science includes the soil type, depth to the water table and characteristics and factors.</p>
3.	<p>What does the 5-year mandatory septic system inspection involve?</p>	<p>For properties in the City of Hamilton subject to the relevant policies, the building division would send out a notice for septic system inspection and a form that the septic system contractor will have to fill in. The process usually involves having the tank pumped and then they will check the inside of the tank, they will walk the area of the leaching bed, fill in the inspection form and send it back to the city.</p>
4.	<p>Does the homeowner pay for the tank to be emptied?</p>	<p>For properties in the City of Hamilton subject to the relevant policies, emptying the tank is a homeowner expense. However, the best management practices for septic system maintenance recommends having your septic tank pumped out every 3 -5 years depending on how much it's used. Ideally if that time overlaps, you have the benefit of having your tank pumped out as well as properly maintaining your septic tank.</p>
5.	<p>What if there is a problem with the tank?</p>	<p>For properties in the City of Hamilton subject to the relevant policies, if the inspector finds that the septic system is not functioning properly, they will recommend repairs.</p>
6.	<p>What is the typical cost for a septic inspection for a residential property? If it does not pass does the municipality assist to cover the costs?</p>	<p>The typical cost usually includes the pump out of the septic tank and the fee for the contractor. For pricing, it is recommended to check with a licensed septic system contractor or a certified on-site sewage inspector as the prices may vary from one year to another. In terms of assistance from the City of Hamilton, there is no financial support available at this time. Note that most septic systems that were inspected passed, with only a very few needing major repairs.</p>

No.	Question	Answer
7.	Does future development like highway construction, large infrastructure etc., get factored into updates to the assessment reports and source protection plan?	Any development that falls within a wellhead protection area gets screened by municipal staff to ensure it does not represent a new significant drinking water threat. In the case that it does represent a new threat, municipal staff will look at the applicable policies. As well, the potential contaminant short cuts or transport pathways is considered.
8.	Why did the vulnerability for intake protection zones go up for some of the intakes?	The land characteristics and land use were reviewed using the latest data available. New modelling data with a better resolution of stream velocities was used, to calculate the distance for 2-hour time of travel which influences the extent of the zone.
9.	What are the mapped ranges of total impervious surfaces?	<p>From the proposed updated map for total impervious surfaces,</p> <p>Red - Equal or greater than 80 % impervious Orange - Greater than 8 % and less than 80 % impervious Yellow - Greater or equal than 1 % and less than 8 % impervious Green - is less than 1 % impervious</p> <p>All maps are publicly posted at www.protectingwater.ca</p>
10.	Is there an area wide desire/intent to get away from using road salt and replace with another method - more friendly to source water?	There are alternative chemicals to the regular road salt that is being applied; however the efficiency of those alternatives depends on factors including the moisture level and temperature at the time. Certain types of road salt or alternatives are not efficient at melting snow or ice in very cold temperatures. Please see the website https://bit.ly/3AAhpGr for a guidance document that includes the pros and cons of different alternative chemicals. Research continues on alternative to the widely used road salt containing chlorides.

For information about the source water protection program in the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region, please visit: www.protectingwater.ca

For information on septic system inspections in the City of Hamilton, please visit the website below and see the section "On-site sewage systems": <https://www.hamilton.ca/source-water-protection>