Drinking Water Turbidity
Frequently Asked Questions for the General Public

What is the reason for the recent Metro Vancouver (GVRD) media release on water turbidity?

The heavy rainfall has resulted in increased levels of suspended solids (turbidity) in our water supply. The advisory was issued to advise you that the safety of your drinking water has not been compromised.

My tap water and the water in my bathroom fixtures is cloudy or even brown coloured. Why is my water discoloured?

The recent heavy rainfalls have caused fine silt materials to slide into the lakes where we draw our drinking water from. This silt is suspended in the drinking water and gives it that cloudy, brownish look. That water has entered the distribution system and your household fixtures.

What is turbidity?

Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of drinking water and it is reported in a unit called NTU.

Is the turbid (discoloured) water acceptable to drink?

While the water may not look aesthetically pleasing, there is no evidence that the safety of the drinking water has been compromised. Local experience has shown that, at the turbidity levels we are currently experiencing, the key strategy to ensure safe drinking water is maintenance of disinfection; i.e., the amount of chlorine residual in the water. Monitoring has been increased as has the level of disinfection in the system.

Do I need to boil the water?

No, a boil advisory has not been issued and the Chief Medical Health Officer has indicated that the water is acceptable to drink.

I have a water treatment system in my house. What information can you provide?

The fine silt particles tend to clog up the filters in many home and commercial filtration systems. If this occurs you would normally see a reduced flow and eventually no flow of water through the treatment systems. For example, fridge filters for ice makers and through the door water dispensers will likely clog up fairly quickly. Until the turbidity advisory has been lifted it may be prudent to turn fridge ice makers and water dispensers off.

How will I know when the turbidity advisory is lifted?

Once turbidity levels have returned to normal, the Medical Health Officer or Metro Vancouver will issue a statement through the media.

Can I speak to a person in Public Health if I have health related questions about the turbidity advisory?

Yes, you can call Vancouver Coastal Health at

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>(604) 675-3800</td>
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<td>North Shore</td>
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