

# Ottawa Drinking Water in Ottawa

The Ottawa Drinking Water System consists of the Lemieux Island Water Purification Plant and the Britannia Water Purification Plant that supply approximately 850,000 people with drinking water.

## Where does the water come from?

Intakes draw water from the Ottawa River and direct it into the water treatment plants.



Lemieux Island Water Purification Plant

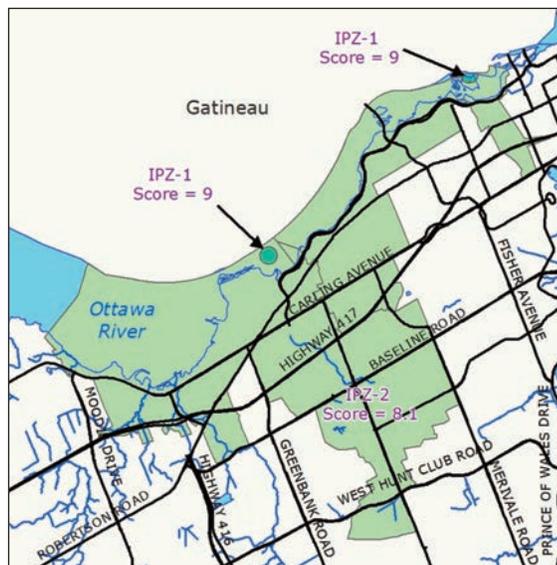
## How is the water treated and distributed?

Raw water from the river is screened to remove debris. A coagulant is then added prior to the water entering the mixing chambers where it follows a spiraling flow pattern to promote gentle mixing (flocculation). The coagulant binds fine particles together forming "floc." Water then flows into sedimentation basins where floc settles to the bottom. Clear water then flows from the top through filters. Water is then disinfected using chlorine and ammonia, pH is adjusted for corrosion control and fluoride is added before the water enters the distribution system. The City of Ottawa Drinking Water System operators must adhere to the strict requirements for the treatment, testing and distribution of drinking water specified in the *Safe Drinking Water Act*. The water is consistently in compliance with Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards.

## How is the drinking water source protected?

Ontario's *Clean Water Act* was created specifically to protect drinking water at the source rather than simply relying on water treatment to deliver safe, clean water. Because of work completed under the *Clean Water Act*, Ottawa now has mapped Intake Protection Zones (IPZs) that are protected through policies in the *Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Plan*.

## The Ottawa Intake Protection Zone

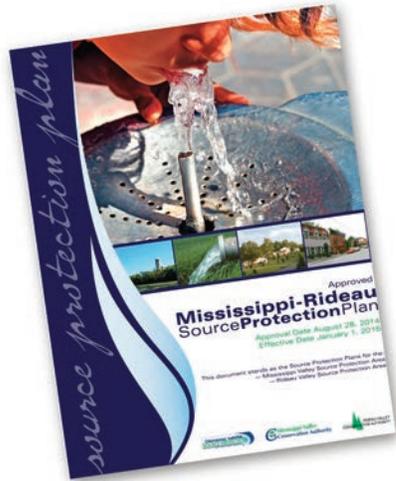


## What is an Intake Protection Zone?

An Intake Protection Zone (IPZ) is the area around a surface water intake (the pipe in the lake or river that draws water into a municipal drinking water treatment plant). This is the zone where activities and land uses have the potential to affect the quality of water at the intake. The size of the IPZ is determined by a variety of factors such as the amount of time it would take for a spill in or near the river to reach the intake. The different parts of the IPZ have different vulnerability scores (between two and 10) which are determined by factors such as the depth of the intake, distance of the intake from land and the water quality history. A higher vulnerability score means a higher level of concern for possible contamination at the intake.

## The Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Plan

The policies to protect the vulnerable drinking water areas, such as the Ottawa Intake Protection Zones, are specified in the *Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Plan*. The Plan was developed by a local committee made up of representatives from municipalities, small business, industry, agriculture, First Nations, environmental groups and the general public.



## Source Protection Policies in the Ottawa Intake Protection Zone

The Source Protection Plan:

- Prohibits the future establishment of incompatible land uses such as landfills near drinking water sources
- Requires governments to ensure that services such as sewers and winter road maintenance do not contaminate drinking water sources
- Ensures that safeguards are in place to reduce the risk of activities such as fuel storage and chemical use
- Encourages all residents and businesses in Intake Protection Zones to take voluntary action to protect the drinking water source

*This is a summary only. For information about specific policies and where they apply, please visit [www.mrsourcewater.ca](http://www.mrsourcewater.ca)*

## Do the same policies apply throughout the Intake Protection Zone?

Different policies apply in different parts of the Intake Protection Zone. This is because science shows us that certain parts are more vulnerable to contamination so stronger protection policies are needed there. Also, different types of contaminants pose varying degrees of risk because of how they behave in the environment when released and this also affects where the policies apply.

## How can I help protect the drinking water source?

Most people will not be affected by mandatory policies that apply in the Intake Protection Zone. However, it is important that we are all aware of where our drinking water comes from and how to protect it.

Here are some ways we can protect the Ottawa River which is the drinking water source for many residents of the City of Ottawa:

1. **Conserve water.** Using less water reduces the burden on the river. Also, too little water in a source can mean contaminants are more concentrated and therefore may be above acceptable levels.
2. **Properly handle and dispose of hazardous substances.** Everything from paints to pharmaceuticals can impact drinking water if not handled and disposed of safely.
3. **Use environmentally friendly products for cleaning and personal care.** Remember that what you use in your house goes down your drain and back into the environment.
4. **Prevent contaminated runoff.** You can do this by reducing or eliminating your use of fertilizers and sidewalk salt, not over-watering your lawn, cleaning up pet waste and by taking your car to a commercial car wash.
5. **Reduce stormwater.** Use rain barrels, plant trees and minimize hard surfaces such as pavement and patio stones.
6. **Maintain your vehicles and take care when handling fuel.** Proper car, boat and motorcycle maintenance prevents oil and other fluid leaks. One litre of gas or oil can contaminate a million litres of water!