

Halton Region to implement new safe water plan

By MELANIE HENNESSEY

The Champion

A plan designed to safeguard the Region's water distribution system will soon come into effect.

Called the Cross-Connection Control Policy, the document is aimed at the industrial/commercial/institutional (ICI) sector with the intent of ensuring contaminants don't enter Halton's water system.

That will be done by mandating properties that

are identified by the Region as 'severe' or 'high hazard' locations — like places that use chemicals — to install backflow prevention devices, which stop contaminated water from flowing back into the municipal distribution system.

The policy will come into effect January 1. It was approved by regional council at its recent meeting, along with an associated bylaw.

Halton Director of Environmental Services Dave Clancy explained that while residential properties don't usually fall into the severe or high hazard categories, the bylaw allows staff to check dwellings that could potentially be.

Along with the bylaw comes a set of fees associated with the backflow prevention devices, including a \$50 permit fee per device, \$75 annual inspection reports and a \$100 survey that must be completed every five years.

In addition, those locations that are mandated to install the devices could have to pay anywhere from \$900, which includes the installation price, to \$12,000.

Before passing the bylaw, Burlington Councillor Jack Dennison voiced his concern that council is implementing something that will

mean a significant expense for some of the Region's water consumers without proper notification.

"I really think we should be letting our ICI customers know this potential cost is coming along," he said.

While Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale concurred that "we should always try to communicate the whys and the wherefores," she noted this policy is also protecting the health of residents.

"This isn't meant to be punitive," she said.

A staff report from Commissioner of Planning and Public Works Peter Crockett explains the cross-connection control program will include an extensive public relations and education component to help the industry and residents understand the issues and concerns surrounding the topic.

It also notes the program will begin with surveying all the ICI properties within Halton. It's estimated it will take six years to fully implement the policy.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessy@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

Taxi owners concerned about cab bylaw changes

By MELANIE HENNESSEY

The Champion

Local taxi owners and drivers turned out to voice their thoughts on proposed changes to the Town's taxicab and limousine bylaw at a public meeting last week.

The potential amendments would see two accessible taxicab owner's plates released to two individuals on the plate waiting list next year and a return to using the population ratio of one taxi plate for every 2,000 residents in 2007.

The current bylaw called for 10 taxi plates to be issued this year, then for Town staff to meet with representatives from the local taxi industry to determine the proper plate-to-population ratio for 2006 and beyond.

Area taxi driver James Bolan told the Town's administration and planning committee, which hosted the public meeting, he thinks a ratio of 1:2,500 or 1:2,800 would be more appropriate.

Harry Brar of Milton Taxi also voiced support for bumping the ratio up to 1:2,500.

A few councillors cited concerns with the 45-day time period the first two people on the plate

waiting list would be given to let the Town know if they're interested in operating an accessible cab, since there's no guarantee they would be. That means the 45-day wait could be repeated several times until the Town finds two takers.

"We could be dead and buried before we get a taxi service for the handicapped," remarked Ward 3 Councillor Jan Mowbray.

Fellow Ward 3 Councillor Cindy Lunau proposed notifying the first six people on the list of the potential opportunity to obtain the accessible owner plates, but Town Licensing Administrator Selena Campbell said there would be legal ramifications to "jumping" the waiting list.

Mr. Brar noted he also thinks 45 days is too long.

"Whoever's going to put the service on is going to let you know right away," he said.

Currently there are 37 names on the waiting list.

It's anticipated a final report and bylaw will be brought forward to council's December 19 meeting.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessy@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

Town officials to speak about what makes Milton different

Residents can dine with local politicians at the Milton Chamber of Commerce's Mayor's Breakfast Thursday.

The event will be held at the Ramada Inn and Conference Centre, 161 Chisholm Dr., with registration at 7 a.m. and breakfast at 7:30 a.m.

The theme of the breakfast is 'Setting Milton

Apart — What Makes Us Different?' Both Mayor Gord Krantz and Milton CAO Mario Belvedere will speak.

Tickets cost \$20 for chamber members and \$24 for non-members. Seats can be reserved by calling (905) 878-0581.

The event is sponsored by Bell Canada.

CORRECTION

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Registration is at the door only, 1 hour before seminar.