

## Media Release

### **Niagara Region and Niagara Regional Police Service warn residents about questionable door-to-door sales tactics**

NIAGARA REGION, September 23, 2009 – Niagara Region and Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) are warning residents about questionable tactics involving sales of water purifying systems. Niagara Region would like to reassure residents that the water produced by its treatment facilities, and delivered to their homes by their municipality, meets or exceeds strict provincial standards and is safe to drink.

The Region has become aware that residents are being approached by door-to-door reverse osmosis water purification sales people who are making use of a 'precipitator' or 'jam jar purity test' to supposedly prove that all water, except for the water produced by their purification equipment, is impure and unsafe for human consumption.

The water "test", done in a resident's home, usually results in a brown substance forming in their water. This is a normal effect when passing an electric current through a sample of water containing minerals (the source of Niagara's drinking water - the Great Lakes - contains naturally occurring minerals). A typical reverse osmosis system will produce water with lower levels of minerals present and will therefore not show a precipitate during this demonstration – so no brown substance appears. But it is not any safer to drink than treated tap water.

"This sounds like a good grade school science experiment on electrical conductivity," said Mike Janas, associate director, Water Operations. "The test says absolutely nothing about water quality - and in fact is being used to mislead residents into believing there is something wrong with their municipal water – which is absolutely not true."

Some sales people may also be testing residents' water for 'total dissolved salts' (TDS). Tap water and filtered water will usually show a higher TDS count than reverse osmosis water – which the sales person tries to have residents believe means their water is unsafe.

"This test also doesn't prove anything about water quality or safety," said Mr. Janas. "TDS alone just tests the mineral content and residents should be aware that there are naturally occurring minerals in all water."

Residents are asked to be wary of such sales pitches and report any such activity to the NRPS. Residents concerned about the safety of their water are asked to contact the Public Works Department of their local municipality or the Region's Water and Wastewater Division at 905-984-3690.

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