

**Managing Threats to Small Drinking Water Systems in Ontario:  
A Risk Based Approach**

**By: Wendy Johnson**

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Master of Applied Science, Ryerson University**

**Abstract**

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Ultimately the goal of Justice O'Connor's recommendations from the Walkerton Inquiry was "to ensure that Ontario's drinking water system deliver water with a level of risk so negligible that a reasonable person would feel safe drinking the water" (O'Connor, 2002a, 5). Following the implementation of Justice O'Connor's recommendations, concerns were raised regarding the management of small drinking water systems using the same stringent rules that were used for municipally-run water systems.

Recommendations have focused on the need for risk assessment when managing the threats to small drinking water systems; however no such system has yet been developed in Ontario. A risk-based approach has been developed that would ensure drinking water protection activities are targeted to items that pose the greatest risk to water systems, resulting in more efficient protection efforts. The creation of such a risk-based program can be used to accurately identify significant threats to a water system and result in the effective management of health threats from small drinking water systems.