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## Ojibways of Onegaming (Sabaskong) First Nation (Band No. 131)

**Date of Visit:** April 30, 2001

by K. Lusignan (OCWA)

**Site Address:** P.O. Box 160

Nester Falls, ON P0X 1K0

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**Tribal Council Affiliation:** Anishinaabeg of Kabapikotawangag Resources Council (AKRC)

**Operator:** Tom Copenace

**Location:** The Ojibways of Onegaming First Nation community is located on Highway 71, an all weather road. The site is 35 km south of Sioux Narrows

**Population:** 447 people in the community (November 2000 – INAC)

**No. of Units:** 99 housing units (CAIS)

### 1.0 Description of the Community Water Supply

Based on the CAIS report, water to the houses in the Ojibways of Onegaming (Sabaskong) community is treated as follows:

- 424 people are serviced by a communal water system; and
- 23 people have no service.
  
- 94 houses are serviced by a communal water system; and
- 5 houses have no service.

### 2.0 Description of the Community Sewage Facilities

Based on the CAIS report, sewage from the houses in the Ojibways of Onegaming (Sabaskong) community is treated as follows:

- 424 people are serviced by septic tanks; and
- 23 people have no service.
  
- 94 houses are serviced by septic tanks; and
- 5 houses have no service.

### 3.0 Overall Assessment for Communal Water Treatment Supply

The questionnaire developed by PWGSC required OCWA to undertake a risk assessment of the Water Source, Design, Operation, Reporting, and Operators. To properly assess these areas, a revisit to the water treatment facilities would be required.

OCWA was requested to undertake the evaluation without a visit to the site. With the available information, OCWA has undertaken the requested assessment of the facilities.

The ranking system used is as follows:

- 0 = Not enough information to assess
- 1-4 = Low Risk
- 5-7 = Medium Risk
- 8-10 = High Risk

For more detailed information on the Risk Assessment used see the Terms of Reference, Appendix B.

SECTION Water	SECTION RANKING Water	RISK Water
<b>A. Water Source</b>		
Biological	0	
Chemical	0	
Physical	0	
Overall Ranking for Water Source	0	No lab data available
<b>B. Design</b>		
Biological	1	No exceedances out of 70 samples
Chemical	7	Total phenolics exceedance
Physical	6	Low hardness and DOC's exceedances noted
Risk to Public Health	7	Phenols, no boil water advisory
Condition of Laboratory Equipment	0	Not inspected
Overall Ranking for Design	7	
<b>C. Operations</b>		
Reservoir Cleanliness	0	No data
Emergency Plan	0	Not inspected
Overall Ranking for Operations	6	No as-built drawings, service disruptions due to power failures
<b>D. Reporting</b>		
Ranking for Laboratories and Testing	2	Regular testing conducted
Ranking for Boil Water Advisories	1	No boil water advisories

<b>SECTION Water</b>	<b>SECTION RANKING Water</b>	<b>RISK Water</b>
Overall Ranking for Reporting	2	
<b>E. Operators</b>		
Overall Ranking for Operators	2	Trained and confident
<b>F. Statistical Data</b>		
Overall Ranking for Individual Wells	0	
Overall Ranking for the System	4	Low Risk

## 4.0 Communal Water Supply (94 houses)

### 4.1 Water Source

The raw water is drawn from the surface water of Crow Lake via a low level intake (by gravity).

### 4.2 Design

The Ojibways of Onegaming community is serviced with a water treatment plant constructed in 1993. The rated design capacity is 137 m<sup>3</sup>/d, however, the operator states that there is adequate capacity to meet the present usage of the system. The raw water is drawn from the surface water of Crow Lake via a low level intake (by gravity) into a separate building.

The following table summarizes the treated water data available from Health Canada, which does not meet GCDWQ:

Date	Location	Exceedance	Result	GCDWQ Limit
May 25, 2000	Treated Surface Water	Hardness	70.9 mg/L	80 – 100 mg/L (OG)
		Dissolved organic carbon	8 mg/L	5 mg/L (AO)
		Total phenolics	0.007 mg/L	0.005 mg/L (AO)
Sept. 5, 2001	Treated Surface Water	Hardness	64 mg/L	80 – 100 mg/L (OG)

AO – Aesthetic Objective

OG – Operational Guideline

The communal water supply consists of a lake intake, pumphouse, chlorination at the intake, and high lift pumps pumping to a pressure tank within the plant and then to the distribution system. The ventilation system for the plant is adequate.

There is a diesel-operated pump for fire protection although it is not tested on a regular basis, and there is an electric fire pump. There is no backup power generator for the water treatment plant. The on-site safety equipment is inadequate.

### 4.3 Operations

The operator expressed no safety concerns. There is adequate designated laboratory, and office/filing areas within the plant, but no workshop area available and no appropriate tools to perform maintenance.

Sodium hypochlorite (12%) treatment is used for distribution. Disinfecting equipment is functional and there is sufficient sodium hypochlorite available. The chemicals have been on site for 1-2 months. An on-site chlorine residual analyzer is absent. The chlorine residuals in the treated water are checked daily. The chemicals are properly stored and there are sufficient test reagents with current shelf life available.

There is no colilert unit and incubator available.

There are operation and maintenance manuals for plant equipment and also operating manuals for the treatment plant available, but the as-built drawings are not readily available. Emergency repair parts are also not readily available. There is a contact listing of technicians/trades people – they are located on the reserve so the average response time is short.

In the last two years there have been service disruptions due to power failures, otherwise there are no recurring operational problems. Annual hydrant flushing and fire hydrant maintenance programs in place, but there lacks an annual main valve operating/maintenance program.

4.5 Reporting

Health Canada conducts bacteriological testing every two weeks on the communal water system. The results are kept at the Health Canada office in Fort Frances.

The following table summarizes the bacteriological data available from Health Canada:

Period	Frequency	Regularity	Exceedances
99/10/21 to 01/09/05	1 time per month from different locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Months missing 1999: Dec.</li> <li>▪ Months missing 2000: Jun., Oct., Dec.</li> <li>▪ Months missing 2001: Jun., Jul.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No exceedances in 70 samples</li> </ul>

There has not been any boil water advisories issued. The turbidity of the treated water is not recorded. A chemical analysis of the treated water is conducted once per year.

4.5 Operators

Tom Copenace is the primary operator of the water treatment plant, while Brian Indian is his backup.

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It is recommended the operators take training in pump repair, basic water, basic sewage, and collection/distribution systems.

**5.0 Deficiencies in the Communal Water Supply**

1. The diesel-operated pump, for fire protection, is not test-run on a regular basis.
2. There is no diesel-operated generator to supply backup power for the plant.
3. There is no confined space equipment in the plant.
4. A workshop area is unavailable and there are no appropriate tools to perform maintenance.
5. There is no colilert unit and incubator available.
6. Service disruptions are due to power failures.
7. There is no annual main-valve operating/maintenance program.
8. Other than an eyewash unit, there is no other safety equipment.
9. Operating manuals for the plant equipment and treatment plant, are available, however as-built drawings are not readily available.

10. Emergency spare parts are not readily available.
11. The chlorine equipment was working and a free chlorine test is done once a day. There is no online chlorine analyzer.
12. The operators are not certified but have had Circuit Rider Training Program. The operators should get more training. They are unfamiliar with calibrating and maintaining the disinfecting equipment.

## **6.0 Classification**

Based upon the terms of reference – Appendix I – Plant Classification Guideline developed by Public Works and Government Services Canada and with discussions with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment Classification Group, OCWA classified this plant as follows:

Water Treatment Facility - Class I

## **7.0 Recommendations**

- Purchase safety equipment.
- Purchase appropriate tools to perform maintenance and set aside space for a workshop area.
- Purchase emergency spare parts.
- Implement a training program that can lead to certification of the operators.
- Consider backup power for the water treatment plant.
- Consider installing an on-line chlorine analyzer. This could save operators time in sampling every day. Also purchase a colilert unit and incubator.
- Obtain as-built drawings.
- Consider putting in place an annual main-valve operating/maintenance program.
- Investigate the problem of poor ventilation within the plant.
- Record water turbidity of the treated water.
- Implement a sewage septic tank inspection program to inspect all septic tanks in the community for proper operations and meeting the required standards.

## **8.0 Overall Community Risk Assessment**

**Water Category – Low Risk**

**Note: Information within this report is based on discussions with the plant operator and a quick visual walkthrough of the facilities. No detailed review was undertaken by OCWA.**