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Want to Know if Your Potable Water is Good for Drinking? The Coral Bay Community Council Wants to Help.

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The Coral Bay Community Council (CBCC) said in a release that it is continuing to encourage residents to test their cistern potable drinking water on a regular basis (at least every 6 months) or if they notice any change in quality (ie. taste, smell, color and visibility). Testing helps assure that potable water supply is safe to drink and bath in, and that filtration and UV purification methods are working.

During the recovery from the 2017 Hurricanes Irma and Maria, people became more aware of the value of finding out if their water contained bacteria above the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Drinking Water Standards limits. Testing is an important task in managing drinking water from rainwater cisterns.

To assist residents with getting their drinking water tested, there is a special program currently being funded by the Rotary District 7020 Hurricane Relief program and managed by the St. Thomas Rotary Club II in partnership with Ocean Systems Laboratory to cover the cost of the drinking water analysis for individual residents. This program provides free residential drinking water tests.

Any resident on St. Thomas or St. John can get their water tested by going to Ocean Systems Laboratory (located in Red Hook - across the street from the Food Center, next to the new Taco Chelles restaurant), the only EPA-certified laboratory open to the public on St. Thomas and St. John and pick up a sterile sample bottle and form. (A deposit for \$10 dollars will be required for the sample bottle). Then fill the sample bottle and return it and the form to the laboratory on the same day that the drinking water sample is collected. After the sample is analyzed, results are generally emailed from the laboratory to the resident within 72 hours.

It is also possible to schedule Ocean Systems Laboratory to come to a person's home on St. Thomas and St. John (upon request by calling 340-714-1911) and collect samples for a fee of approximately \$70.00 including the analysis.

"For most residents in Coral Bay, making two trips to St. Thomas to get free water testing is just not realistic" said Rachel McKinley, CBCC Environmental Projects Manager. "Therefore, the Coral Bay Community Council (CBCC) continues to build awareness by Coral Bay residents on the importance of testing and managing their cistern potable water supply by providing occasional group pick-up and drop-off service at CBCC's office." This service was developed as an add-on to the St. Thomas Rotary Club II water testing program to alleviate the time and costs in picking up and dropping off drinking water samples for Coral Bay residents.

Previous post-hurricane testing of these systems has shown that some UV and filter systems were not yielding bacteria-free water at household faucets. It was determined that household pipes may also need to be flushed and bleach-treated – especially after long periods of low to no use. More information on ways to do this can be found on CBCC's website at:

<https://coralbaycommunitycouncil.org/water-and-wastewater/> and also in this helpful guide to maintaining UV Filtration systems in your home.

<https://coralbaycommunitycouncil.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/Ecrqoy1sHmVJp0j4FyyTqV4BEWSH7nOe9TTDcJMI>

CBCC has periodically provided this pick up/drop off service since 2010 and is looking forward to helping Coral Bay residents again. To participate in this testing event, please follow these steps:

Step 1 - Starting Monday March 2nd, residents can stop by the Coral Bay Community Council's Office (across from the Coral Bay Fire Station) from 9 am to 5 pm to register with a deposit check (No Cash) for \$10.00 payable to Ocean Systems Laboratory and pick up a sterilized container and sampling forms (until supplies run out). Sample bottles are limited, one bottle per household and are on a first come, first serve basis.

Step 2 - On Monday March 9th, residents will collect their drinking water sample and drop-off it along with forms from 7 am to 9 am. Deposit checks will be returned upon receipt of the forms and sample.

This event is follow-on work that was supported under a grant by the Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) and a part of The Coral Bay Watershed Management Project <https://coralbaycommunitycouncil.org/watershed-management-project/>: Resource & Waste Management.

<https://coralbaycommunitycouncil.org/water-and-wastewater/>

For more information about potable water and / or wastewater treatment systems contact Rachel McKinley, CBCC Environmental Programs Manager at 340-776-2099, or water@CoralBayCommunityCouncil.org or to stop by the office.

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