



Passaic Valley Water Commission

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PVWC BOIL WATER NOTICE

Frequently Asked Questions as of 9/21/21

Why am I being told to boil my water? On September 2nd, Hurricane Ida produced torrential rainfall. This caused water run-off to overflow and contaminate the 52-million-gallon New Street Reservoir. The New Street Reservoir is an open finished reservoir, meaning water is stored there after it is treated but before the water is distributed to you.

Although water is not being used from this reservoir, a potential or actual threat to the quality of water being provided to you currently exists. As a result, all impacted areas should boil their water before drinking. You can visit www.PVWC.com/Alerts/ for more information.

Do I live in the impacted area? The Boil Water Notice is in effect for all of Paterson and Passaic, as well as parts of Clifton and Woodland Park.

- A map of the impacted area is [available here](#) or by visiting www.PVWC.com/Alerts/
- A listing of impacted streets is [available here](#) or by visiting www.PVWC.com/Alerts/

What does this mean to me? Do not consume the water without boiling it first or use bottled water. Boiled or bottled water should be used for drinking; preparing foods; mixing baby formula, food, juices or drinks; washing vegetables and fruit; cooking; making ice; brushing teeth; drinking water for pets and washing dishes until further notice.

Bring all water to a rolling boil for one minute, and let it cool before using, or use bottled water. Boiling kills bacteria and other organisms in the water. Ice or any beverages prepared with tap water after 9/1/2021 should be discarded.

Can I use the water for baths, shower, washing dishes or clothes? Unless a "Do Not Use" notification has been issued, your water may be used by healthy individuals for showering, bathing, shaving, and washing if care is taken not to swallow water and avoid shaving nicks. To minimize the chance of infections, people with open wounds, cuts, blisters or recent surgical wounds and people who are immunocompromised or suffer from chronic illness should use boiled water (then cooled) or water from an alternate source. Children and disabled individuals should be supervised to ensure water is not ingested. Sponge bathing is advisable, and bathing time should be minimized to further reduce the potential for ingestion.

How should I wash my hands during a boil water advisory? Generally, vigorous hand washing with soap and your tap water is safe for basic personal hygiene. If you are washing your hands to prepare food, you should use boiled (then cooled) water, bottled water, or water from another acceptable source for hand washing. If a "Do Not Use" notification has been issued (as example, when sewage or chemical contamination is present), your water should not be used for any purpose, including personal hygiene. Only water from an acceptable alternate source should be used instead.

Can the water be absorbed through my pores? No. Bacteria in water is not absorbed through your pores. Water is a small, polar molecule that can be absorbed by the cells on the surface of your skin. Even water cannot be absorbed directly into the blood stream. Your skin is part of your innate immune system. It can produce some compounds that help prevent microbial infection, however we all live with millions of bacteria on our skin. This is part of our normal microbial flora helps keep us healthy. These microbes, and the microbes that might be found in the water, can't get absorbed into the body.

How long will this continue? The situation continues because we need to resolve the contamination issues before using water from the New Street Reservoir. The New Street Reservoir holds 52-million-gallons of drinking water so it will take a number of days to wash out the dirty water from the reservoir. Unfortunately, it is difficult to predict how long it could take before the water in the reservoir is back to safe water quality standards. As of September 15th, our estimate was an additional 3-4 weeks.

When will we be able to drink water without boiling it? Once the water is back to safe water quality standards, PVWC will begin using water from the New Street Reservoir again. PVWC will make announcements via the news media, on social media, through the community public information offices and other vehicles to let you know that it's again safe to drink the water.

If you have additional questions, please contact our Customer Service Department at 973-340-4300.

Thanks.