



Testing shows Benton Harbor water system back to normal operations following water main break

Bacteria testing shows no contamination, but bottled water advisory still in effect due to excessive lead levels

The Benton Harbor water system is back to normal operations and testing shows no evidence of bacteriological contamination following a water main break that resulted in a complete loss of pressure in the system on Oct. 20.

Following extensive flushing of the system to remove any contaminants that may have entered during the water main break, two rounds of bacterial testing from several locations confirm no the water is bacteriologically safe.

While the bacteriological risk has been eliminated, residents are still advised to use bottled water until further notice for cooking, drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, rinsing foods, and mixing powdered infant formula due to the ongoing advisory for lead in drinking water. Food establishments may return to guidance issued prior to the water main break.

The State Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) offers the following guidance for Benton Harbor residents to ensure health and safety in the wake of the water main break:

- As stated, residents should continue to use bottled water for cooking, drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, rinsing foods, and mixing powdered infant formula.
- The city will continue to be under a bottled water advisory out of an abundance of caution to reduce the risk of lead until further notified.
- Now that water pressure is restored, residents should flush the water taps for five minutes before using the water for washing hands, showering or bathing.
- For faucets with removable aerators – small screens that trap sediments – remove them and clean any debris that has accumulated. Then reinstall the aerator.
- The water may have discoloration following the emergency. This is due to sediment within the water lines caused by the disruption in pressure. Residents should run water until it is clear before using for showering, bathing and other non-consuming activities. If water does not run clear, report the problem to the city so they can respond.

- Flush toilets at least twice to move fresh water through the plumbing.
- For faucets and showers: If possible, remove faucet aerators before flushing. Run cold water taps at full flow for several minutes first, followed by hot water taps.
- Run an empty load in dishwashers and washing machines to clear the water lines. Additional dates and locations for bottled water pick up will be added to make sure community needs are met.



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Date

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