



For Immediate Release
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River Sampling Update

Northern Kentucky Water District (NKWD) Reopens Water Intake

Erlanger, KY – On February 3, 2023, in East Palestine, Ohio, a train with tanker cars carrying several types of chemicals derailed and ruptured. Emergency responders were able to quickly respond and contain most of the chemicals. One of the chemicals, however, butyl acrylate, was detected at low levels in the Ohio River far upstream of our water supply intakes. Butyl acrylate is a clear liquid with a sweet odor used in arts and crafts, adhesives, flooring, sinks, bathtubs, to name just a few of the uses of the chemical.

Northern Kentucky Water District (NKWD) continues to work closely with drinking water utilities that rely on the Ohio River as well as the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) and state and federal regulatory partners to closely monitor the Ohio River. ORSANCO has a detection system that is located along the entire 981 miles of the Ohio River using sophisticated instruments to analyze for chemicals that may be present in the river. Samples are collected daily at several locations along the Ohio River. NKWD is in close contact with ORSANCO and its partners to monitor the river.

NKWD, in concert with GCWW, shut down its Ohio River intakes as a precautionary measure at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, February 19th, ahead of the leading edge of any trace remnants in the Ohio River. NKWD also began additional sampling of the Ohio River.

During samples collected upstream from the intake and analyzed Sunday morning, a compound called 2-Ethyl-1-hexanol was detected. This compound is commonly used in industrial applications including flavorings and fragrances.

Northern Kentucky Water District (NKWD) serves approximately 81,000 customer accounts, or nearly 300,000 people in Campbell and Kenton Counties, portions of Boone, Grant and Pendleton Counties, and the Greater Cincinnati Northern Kentucky International Airport.



After extensive sampling of river water Sunday through Monday morning, there have been no detections of butyl acrylate. As to 2-Ethyl-1-hexanol, only low levels were detected near the closed intake on February 19, 2023 and have not been detected since that time. NKWD has determined it is safe to reopen the water intake. As a reminder, NKWD had the water intake closed throughout this sampling period, so no river water entered the water plant.

NKWD reopened its intakes Monday afternoon and has resumed normal operations. NKWD's state-of-the art treatment processes – powdered activated carbon in addition to granular activated carbon (GAC) – are in place as a protective treatment barrier.

“Maintaining the safety of our community’s drinking water is our highest priority,” said Lindsey Rehtin, President & CEO of NKWD. “The response to this Ohio River spill event has been extraordinary. I cannot express enough gratitude to all NKWD staff for their efforts to ensure that our community’s drinking water supply remains safe and reliable. Moreover, the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) and Thomas More University have been incredible partners throughout this event. As a community member, I am grateful to know that the health of my family is safe because of their efforts.”

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