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Official public information on behalf of the Incident Command System

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Kaktovik Water Incident Management Team Operational Update

The **Do Not Drink the Water** notice remains in effect until officially lifted. Kaktovik residents should continue using an alternative source of water for drinking, cooking, brushing teeth, making ice, and other activities involving consumption.

Cleaning and preparing the North Tank for refilling are complete. Refilling through the pipeline from the lake is underway and will continue as weather conditions permit.

Samples collected on September 10 and 11, 2026, from the lake water, the raw-water intake at the lake, soil near the lake, and soil behind the water treatment plant showed no ethylene glycol or propylene glycol above the laboratory's stated detection limits.

Drinking Water Q&A

What have the water testing results shown so far?

- Since the August 16 event, water tests have produced different results – more testing is in progress.
 - September 5: Laboratory results reported ethylene glycol at about 26–33 mg/L in the water samples collected from the system.
 - September 14: Laboratory test results for new water samples reported no detectable ethylene glycol or propylene glycol above the laboratory method detection limits in samples collected September 7 from the North and South water storage tanks, both distributions loop returns, the nanofiltration system, and the water truck.
 - Currently: Additional water samples collected on September 14 have been sent to the laboratory for analysis using lower detection limits. Results are pending.

If the September 5 water test results were accurate, what would be the health impacts for Kaktovik residents who drank the water?

- Based on the water test results reported on September 5 and known toxicological information of ethylene glycol, adverse health effects are *not* expected.
- Water test results on September 5 indicated that ethylene glycol concentrations in the South Tank and water distribution system were *above* the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lifetime health advisory level.
 - A lifetime health advisory is an estimated amount of a contaminant that is *not* expected to cause adverse health effects for a lifetime of exposure.
 - It is important to note that consuming more than the lifetime health advisory level does *not* mean that a person who drank the water would become ill.



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- The amount and concentration of ethylene glycol swallowed are important factors in evaluating possible health effects.
- The September 5 results are being reviewed with additional water tests and health information gathered by the Incident Command.
- Additional water testing is taking place and will provide a better understanding of the water quality and the appropriate next steps.

What findings have the on-site medical team identified from chart reviews, clinical evaluations, and resident testing?

- So far, the on-site Samuel Simmonds Memorial Hospital clinical team has not found evidence of ethylene glycol toxicity in medical charts reviewed from August and September or through the testing of more than 65 residents.
- Based on the medical knowledge available, these results are consistent with the predicted outcomes from September 5, that adverse health effects are *not* expected.

What is ethylene glycol?

- Ethylene glycol is a clear, odorless chemical used in some antifreeze and de-icing products.
- Ingesting large amounts of ethylene glycol can be harmful. The health effects depend on how much is swallowed and the concentration of the chemical.
 - *Very small amounts* are not expected to result in negative health effects.
 - *Moderate amounts* may cause nausea, vomiting, dizziness, or headache.
 - *Large amounts*, especially concentrated ethylene glycol, can cause serious poisoning, including changes in blood chemistry and damage to the nervous system, heart, and kidneys. Severe poisoning can be life-threatening.
- You cannot see, smell, or taste ethylene glycol at the levels measured in the water samples.

What should I do if I am worried about my possible exposure to ethylene glycol or having symptoms (nausea, vomiting, dizziness or headache)?

- If you are worried about your exposure or have symptoms, contact your healthcare provider. Tell them when and how much of the water you consumed.
- Ethylene glycol is processed and eliminated from the body quickly. Medical testing days or weeks later usually cannot verify whether a person had a low-level exposure earlier.
- The NSB Incident Command is waiting for additional water test results to better understand exposure. Updates can be found at: <https://kaktovikwater.org>

Who may be more sensitive to the effects of ethylene glycol?

- People with chronic kidney disease or other health conditions that impact their ability to process or eliminate chemicals in the body.
- Pregnant women.

What should I know about using Kaktovik tap water right now?

- DO NOT DRINK KAKTOVIK TAP WATER until officials announce that the Do Not Drink Order is lifted.



- Until the NSB Incident Command confirms the water is safe to use, use bottled water or another approved water source for:
 - Drinking
 - Cooking
 - Making beverages and ice
 - Brushing your teeth
 - Making infant formula
 - Giving water to children or pets
- Boiling the tap water will NOT make water with ethylene glycol safer to drink. Ethylene glycol is not removed by boiling.
- Do not rely on household water filters or let the water sit, as this will not remove ethylene glycol.

Can I bathe or wash with the water?

- The current order does not prohibit bathing or washing with water.
- Continue to follow any more water-use orders issued by the NSB Incident Command.

Is it safe to eat whale meat cooked with Kaktovik water during the Do Not Drink Order?

- NSB Incident Command is collecting whale meat specimens for testing.
- Until test results confirm the meat is safe, we advise storing your food rather than throwing it away.
- Please keep your food until there is more information and better guidance can be provided.
- Water with ethylene glycol is unlikely to impact cooked meat. The amount of ethylene glycol found in Kaktovik water is below levels that would cause health risks, and any amounts in cooked foods are expected to be even lower. Since ethylene glycol does not attach to fats or proteins, the cooking process is not likely to add the chemical to the meat.
- But, without directly testing the whale meat for ethylene glycol, we cannot fully guarantee its safety.

When can I drink the tap water again?

- DO NOT DRINK KAKTOVIK TAP WATER until officials announce that the Do Not Drink Order has ended.
- The order will stay in place until testing shows that the water can be safely used for drinking.
- Officials will announce the test results and any changes to the Do Not Drink Order as soon as that information is available.

