



State Joint Information News Clips

August 3, 2014

Toledo, Ohio Water Contamination Leaves Residents Scrambling To Buy Bottled Water

AP | By JOHN SEEWER

Posted: 08/02/2014 6:52 am EDT

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP) — Toxins possibly from algae on Lake Erie fouled the water supply of the state's fourth-largest city Saturday, forcing officials to issue warnings not to drink the water and the governor to declare a state of emergency as worried residents descended on stores, quickly clearing shelves of bottled water.

"It looked like Black Friday," said Aundrea Simmons, who stood in a line of about 50 people at a pharmacy before buying four cases of water. "I have children and elderly parents. They take their medication with water."

The city advised about 400,000 residents in Toledo, most of its suburbs and a few areas in southeastern Michigan not to brush their teeth with or boil the water because that would only increase the toxin's concentration. The mayor also warned that children should not shower or bathe in the water and that it shouldn't be given to pets.

Toledo issued the warning just after midnight after tests at one treatment plant showed two sample readings for microcystin above the standard for consumption.

Gov. John Kasich said it was too early to say how long the advisory will last or what caused toxins to spike suddenly in the drinking water.

"We don't really want to speculate on this," he told The Associated Press. "When it comes to this water, we've got to be very careful."

The governor and his staff said state agencies were working to bring water and other supplies to areas around Toledo while also assisting hospitals and other affected businesses.

"What's more important than water? Water's about life," Kasich said. "We know it's difficult. We know it's frustrating."

Algae blooms during the summer have become more frequent and troublesome around the western end of Lake Erie, the shallowest of the five Great Lakes.

The algae growth is fed by phosphorous mainly from farm fertilizer runoff and sewage treatment plants, leaving behind toxins that have contributed to oxygen-deprived dead zones where fish can't survive. The toxins can kill animals and sicken humans.

Scientists had predicted a significant bloom of the blue-green algae this year, but they didn't expect it to peak until early September.

Kasich's emergency order issued Saturday allowed the state to begin bringing water into the Toledo area. Large containers were being filled with water at a prison near Columbus and trucked about 130 miles north to Toledo, said Joe Andrews, a spokesman for the Ohio Department of Public Safety.

The state also asked major grocery chains to divert as much water as they can to northwest Ohio, Andrews said.

As truckloads of water came in from across the state, Toledo leaders set up distribution centers at schools around the city, limiting families to one case of bottled water. Some stores were receiving new shipments of water and putting limits on how much people can buy. The Red Cross was helping distribute water to homebound residents.

"We're going to be prepared to make sure people are not without water," said Toledo Mayor D. Michael Collins.

He said the city hopes to know Saturday night how long the warning will stay in place, and he pleaded with residents not to panic. There were no reports yet of people becoming sick from drinking the water, Collins said.

Samples of water were flown to the federal and state Environmental Protection Agency offices in Cincinnati and Columbus and a university in Michigan for additional testing, officials said.

State EPA Director Craig Butler said that the first tests indicating trouble with the water came Friday night and that additional testing confirmed the elevated readings. He said the water coming from the lake into Toledo's water plant had relatively low toxicity levels this summer until this sudden spike that sent residents scrambling for clean water.

Police officers were called to stores early Saturday morning as people lined up to buy bottled water, bags of ice and flavored water.

"People were hoarding it. It's ridiculous," said Monica Morales, who bought several cases of bottled water before the store sold out of water a half-hour after opening.

Stores in cities up to 50 miles away were reporting shortages of bottled water. Some neighboring communities that aren't connected to Toledo's water system were offering their water to people who brought their own bottles and containers.

Operators of water plants all along Lake Erie, which supplies drinking water for 11 million people, have been concerned over the last few years about toxins fouling their supplies.

Almost a year ago, one township just east of Toledo told its 2,000 residents not to drink or use the water coming from their taps. That was believed to be the first time a city has banned residents from using the water because of toxins from algae in the lake.

Most water treatment plants along the western Lake Erie shoreline treat their water to combat the algae. Toledo spent about \$4 million last year on chemicals to treat its water and combat the toxins.



Toledo Issues Do-Not-Drink Advisory for Tap Water

About 400,000 residents in and around the city of Toledo, Ohio, were warned Saturday not to drink tap water after a toxin was detected in the water supply. Ohio Gov. John Kasich declared a state of emergency for Lucas County and neighboring Wood County, the Ohio Department of Public Safety said in a statement. Chemists at a Toledo water treatment plant recorded readings of microcystin, a highly toxic substance that can cause abnormal liver function, diarrhea and vomiting, [according to an advisory](#). Residents were warned not to drink tap water even after boiling because that could increase the toxin's concentration. Residents can still use the tap water to flush toilets but were warned that children shouldn't bathe in the water and pets shouldn't drink it.

Store shelves in and around Toledo were emptied of bottled drinking water within a few hours. Toledo said it would distribute water supplies to affected residents and asked people not to buy or sell water. The toxin, the city said, was likely borne from algal blooms in Lake Erie. Toledo spent roughly \$4 million last year in water treatment because of algae concerns and this incident is believed to be the second time in two years a city has issued a do-not-drink advisory because of algae toxins from the lake, The Associated Press reported.

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Water crisis grips hundreds of thousands in Toledo area, state of emergency declared

BY TOM HENRY , BLADE STAFF WRITER

August 3, 2014

A once-unthinkable crisis in the world's greatest freshwater region — one that sent more than 500,000 metro Toledo residents scrambling for bottled water Saturday — enters its second day today, with officials inside the city's Collins Park Water Treatment Plant wondering how much longer it will take before clean, safe, and reliable tap water will flow again from faucets of area homes and businesses.

“We've been getting mixed results,” Jeff Martin, a senior chemist at the plant, confessed during an exclusive interview with The Blade on Saturday while performing tests for microcystin — a toxin produced by the harmful blue-green algae known as microcystis — inside the plant's laboratory on samples drawn from 39 metro Toledo sites.

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The cause of the microcystis algae bloom is primarily phosphorus from farm fertilizer runoff, and the amount of phosphorus determines the bloom's size. Scientists are also learning that another farm fertilizer, nitrogen, affects the size and composition of the annual bloom.

Toledo sits on the shoreline of the Great Lakes, which holds 20 percent of the world's fresh surface water.

A small water treatment plant in Ottawa County's Carroll Township was Ohio's first to be overwhelmed by the toxin last September.

Until 2 a.m. Saturday, city and state environmental officials maintained such a crisis was unlikely in Toledo because the water plant is western Lake Erie's largest and most sophisticated.

But after seeing symptoms of a problem emerge late Friday — a series of suspicious test results that showed a pattern of contamination — officials were told by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to issue the city's first "do not drink" or boil warning to the system's customers.

The warning went out on Facebook, followed by a series of news conferences.

Toledo Mayor D. Michael Collins said he was notified about 10 p.m. Friday that the numbers weren't good — even though the algae season has barely begun.

About midnight, he heard of the Ohio EPA's plans to issue a warning against drinking the water.

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"I don't believe we'll ever be back to normal," the mayor said during an evening news conference. "But this is not going to be our new normal. We're going to fix this. Our city is not going to be abandoned."

For most of Saturday, Mr. Collins and others conferred among themselves and via phone with Gov. John Kasich from the Lucas County Emergency Services Building near downtown after the governor had declared a state of emergency.

Meanwhile, confusion reigned inside the Toledo water treatment plant, with no clear answers if other water systems in the western Lake Erie region were in danger of a similar crisis or if Toledo might have possibly had a series of false positives because of the federal EPA's failure to settle on standard testing protocol.



People buy water in the Dixie Highway Kroger in Frenchtown Township in Monroe County.
THE BLADE/TAYLOR DUNGJEN

Water plant operators from Monroe to Sandusky have been urging the federal regulatory agency to develop a testing standard, asserting they are the public's last line of defense but are left without knowing the best way to test for microcystin.

PHOTO GALLERY: Water advisory impacts Toledo area

PHOTO GALLERY: More of Toledo water crisis

"They have just been sort of waffling on it," Mr. Martin said about the U.S. EPA.

The federal agency has said it is still months away from finalizing such a standard.

Toledo has an eight-phase treatment process.

The chemical permanganate is applied in the water-intake crib 3 miles north of the shoreline, starting the treatment process before the water even gets to the plant, which can take six to 12 hours. The length of time aids in reducing contaminants, officials said.

Along the way, the raw lake water is treated with powdered activated carbon, mostly for taste and odor; alum, to bind particles together and make them easier to remove; lime, to reduce hardness; soda ash, to neutralize excess alum; polyphosphate for stability; chlorine, for disinfection, and fluoride, to combat tooth decay.

The decision on when Toledo's water is going to be safe enough to drink again is "basically going to be the Ohio EPA's call," a weary Jeff Calmes, the plant's administrator of operations, said after being up more than 38 consecutive hours.

Depending on the results, the same treatment process could be used.

The Ohio EPA is awaiting results of samples sent off to a U.S. EPA laboratory in Cincinnati, a state EPA lab in Columbus, and a lab at Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., before making that call.

"At this point, we're waiting on test results," Andy McClure, plant superintendent, said.

Data from tests performed by Toledo and Oregon are "very confusing for everyone," Mr. Collins said. "We really don't have a true answer. One set of tests is different from the other," he said. "... We don't know for sure [whether] these [city] tests are proof positive, but certainly we're not taking any risks."



Toledo Mayor D. Michael Collins speaks with U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur outside the Lucas County Emergency Management Agency building. [THE BLADE/JETTA FRASER](#) [Enlarge](#) | [Buy This Photo](#)

Mr. Collins said he will not tell Toledo residents to resume drinking water from their taps until he is convinced it is safe enough for children.

Water was expected to be available again today at several locations, including Woodmore, Waite, Central Catholic, and Springfield high schools, as well as at least two fire stations in Oregon.

At the Collins Park water-treatment plant, Mr. Calmes was one of many employees distressed by the ordeal.

Many were going on little or no sleep.

"We've got a very dedicated work force," Mr. Calmes said. "It's an 'all-hands-on-deck' mentality here today."

Records show the first sign of microcystin inside the Collins Park Water Treatment Plant appeared on July 6, when a reading barely high enough to be detected by the plant's technology was recorded.

That, in itself, is not unusual. The toxin has been found at low levels before inside the plant since 1995, when microcystis reappeared in western Lake Erie after a 20-year absence.

The toxin appeared again inside the water plant between July 15 and 18.

But until Saturday, it never was known to slip through the plant's multi-staged treatment process. That triggered the region's largest known water crisis, which prompted many residents to begin scrambling for bottled water hours before dawn.

Shortly after the bulletin was put online at 2 a.m. Saturday, residents emptied shelves of bottled water in grocery stores and carry-outs within about a 100-mile radius.

Water that had been destined for other parts of the state was diverted to northwest Ohio so stores could restock. The National Guard trucked in water from Akron and Piqua, which is north of Dayton. Premixed formula and military meals were delivered to Toledo from Columbus.



Water stations were set up at high schools, fire stations, and even unannounced locations around the area.

The Village of Pioneer in western Williams County made one of the most generous offers of the day:

They said they would make 600,000 gallons of potable water available every 24 hours. Those interested must bring their own trucks, containers, or bottles to 409 First St. in the village.

Restaurants in the affected area were urged to close unless they can guarantee no consumption of tap water. Bottled water shipments that were destined to other regions were rerouted to Toledo, said Kroger spokesman Jackie Siekmann.

Joe Andrews, Ohio Department of Public Safety spokesman, said the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections had converted its milk-bottling plant near Columbus to package drinking water in large bladders.

Dr. David Grossman, director of the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department, said a safe level of microcystin is 0, but an allowable level is below 1 parts per million.

At the Collins Park plant, water was testing as high as 2.5 parts per million, he said.

Toledo-area hospitals reported more than 100 people sought treatment in emergency rooms by late afternoon, concerned that they were ill from ingesting contaminated water. Some displayed symptoms such as upset stomach, dizziness, and vomiting.

When word went out Saturday morning that Toledo's tap water was contaminated, Garrett Wieland, of Toledo, heard the news just before 8 a.m. and yelled to his girlfriend not to get in the shower. He then headed out in search of bottled water, ending up a couple blocks from home at the Walgreen at 4580 Monroe St.

He was among a crowd of shoppers who had heard the store had bottled water available, but found the clerks were selling water that had yet to arrive on a truck from the distribution center south of Toledo. Sales were limited to five cases of 24-ounce water bottles per customer and sold out within minutes.

"We were lucky to get some," Mr. Wieland said. "The line was just crazy, and things got a little heated in there."

Hope Gonzalez, who lives in the Old West End, also was among the shoppers who waited, sometimes sitting on overturned shopping carts or chairs and milk crates that Walgreen employees brought out from the store.

“Lesson learned,” Ms. Gonzalez said. “I will always be buying water every time I go to the store now. We’re never getting caught without some water in the house again.”

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MICROCYSTIS ALGAE

Rest of region on high alert for contamination

BY DAVID PATCH - BLADE STAFF WRITER

August 3, 2014

Read more at <http://www.toledoblade.com/local/2014/08/03/Rest-of-region-on-high-alert-for-contamination.html#3RQtKVu76TmIC50H.99>

Toledo’s water emergency Saturday had a familiar ring for Henry Biggert, superintendent of the water treatment plant in Ottawa County’s Carroll Township, which was shut down for 12 days last September by a similar microcystin crisis.

“We definitely have our guard up,” Mr. Biggert said Saturday afternoon. “We’ve been working on this all year.”

But Carroll Township’s latest test sample, taken Wednesday, had shown none of the toxin, produced by the microcystis algae that have bloomed in recent weeks in western Lake Erie, in its raw water, much less the treated product it sends to its customers, Mr. Biggert said.



This satellite image shows the green algae currently on Lake Erie. NOAA.GOV

The city of Monroe’s water plant also was not affected, and leaders there said they test water samples on a weekly basis.

Officials from the nearby Ottawa County plant, which serves Oak Harbor and Port Clinton, said they had no microcystin in their water, either, but were on alert, while Oregon City Administrator Mike Beazley said the toxin had turned up in his city’s intake but so far had been successfully treated by increasing use of activated carbon.

“Every city with a water intake on Lake Erie has to be aware of the algae,” Mr. Beazley said, “and the steps to be taken to protect their drinking water.”

“It’s a train coming down the tracks, and we’re watching very closely,” said Kelly Frey, Ottawa County’s sanitary engineer.

Under a response plan it submitted earlier this year to state officials, Ottawa County is prepared to shut off the connections between its treatment plants and its water tower and towers belonging to Port Clinton and Oak Harbor if a microcystin problem develops there, Mr. Frey said. Those water towers provide more than 1 million gallons in water reserves that could be distributed for drinking and cooking in an emergency.

Mr. Biggert said he has a 500,000-gallon tank plus 640,000 gallons in underground storage that also could be isolated if need be.

With consumption of about 240,000 to 290,000 gallons per day, “we can kind of pick and choose when we draw” water from Lake Erie, Mr. Biggert said.

But last year, Carroll Township’s plant, which uses reverse osmosis to treat its water, was overwhelmed by the algal toxin. It took 44 hours for the township utility to tap into the Ottawa County supply, with customers dependent on bottled water in the interim, and 10 days after that for Carroll to resume its own plant’s operation.

How long it might take Toledo to flush out and restart its water system, Mr. Biggert said, will depend on how far into the system the toxin got and how the city clears it out.

Mr. Beazley said Oregon’s plant started detecting microcystin in its raw water about 11 days ago, but only intermittently at first, while levels Saturday were significantly elevated over Friday’s.

At no time has any microcystin been detected in Oregon’s treated water, he said.

Mr. Beazley said Oregon officials would not comment on why Oregon’s results were clean, and Toledo’s were not, even though their Lake Erie intakes are near each other.

Mr. Frey’s and Mr. Biggert’s plants both normally take samples to Oregon for testing each Wednesday. Mr. Frey said Ottawa County made an extra trip Saturday “because Toledo has problems,” but all results were negative, while Mr. Biggert said an extra trip is likely from Carroll’s plant today or Monday for the same reason.

Mr. Frey added that there will probably be “one great debate” Monday in Ottawa County about how often to test now that the algae has reached crisis level farther west on Lake Erie.

Fed largely by nutrients that flow into the lake from the Maumee River, he said, the algae blooms typically spread from west to east.

“We track it through satellite imagery” provided by the federal government, Mr. Frey said.

The sanitary engineer complained, however, that Lake Erie’s algae issue is being handled in a reactionary way, with little scientific examination of its causes, what its most effective treatments are, or even guidance of how often water-plant operators should be testing for microcystin contamination.

“We’re just throwing chemicals at it,” Mr. Frey said. “... As plant operators, we can only take the information that is given to us, and this is a new issue. The EPA has no guidance for us. The problem is way ahead of the science.”

Speaking outside the Lucas County Emergency Services Building in downtown Toledo, U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R., Ohio) said reauthorization of a federal program to address harmful algal blooms and hypoxia research that he and Sen. Bill Nelson (D., Florida) co-sponsored — and which President Obama signed into law July 1 — should make inroads in that area.

“We do have a problem with these toxic algal blooms,” Mr. Portman said. The bipartisan legislation will provide funds for better research, remediation, and monitoring of algae, he said, noting that for the first time the program has language specifically prioritizing the Great Lakes.

U.S. Rep. Bob Latta (R., Bowling Green), said he plans to introduce legislation soon that would make the National Oceanographic and Aeronautical Administration a coordinating agency to gather information and research to disseminate to Congress, while U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D., Toledo), said the algae outbreak is further proof that steps are needed to curb fertilizer runoff into the Maumee River, which flows into Lake Erie.

“We need to stop loading nutrients into the lake. That’s the real solution,” Miss Kaptur said. The agricultural load on the Maumee, she said, accumulates in the water and lake sediment, and “that’s why [the blooms are] getting bigger and bigger.”

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Fish from lake OK to eat, officials say

DNR testing found no toxins in meat

BY MATT MARKEY - BLADE OUTDOORS EDITOR

August 3, 2014

While toxic Lake Erie algae has created a water crisis in Toledo, fish from the lake are safe to eat, state authorities and scientists have said.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has conducted testing on fish from Lake Erie in the past to determine if the presence of algae blooms would result in the meat being tainted by toxins in the water. Jeff Tyson, the Lake Erie program administrator for the Division of Wildlife’s fisheries unit in Sandusky, said Saturday that the research indicated that the fish were safe to eat.

“There were no detectable amounts of these toxins in the tissues of the fish when we did that testing, and my feeling is that has not changed,” Mr. Tyson said. “As long as the fillets are properly cleaned and rinsed, they should be fine to eat.”

Paul Pacholski, president of the Lake Erie Charter Boat Association, said biologists from Ohio State University are engaged in additional testing of walleyes from the lake to determine if the algae blooms present any health concerns for people eating the fish, and as recently as this last week, Mr. Pacholski sent more tissue and water samples in for analysis.

“It needs to be stated over and over again that they have been doing this tissue study, and what they have found is that there is no issue with eating the fish from the lake,” he said.

Dave Spangler, the president of the Lake Erie Waterkeeper, an environmental, conservation, and educational group, said studies have shown that the toxins in the water would accumulate in the liver of the fish, and thus be discarded during the cleaning process.

“Everything we’ve seen to this point in the ongoing testing indicates that if the fish is cleaned properly and the skin removed, it should be safe for consumption,” Mr. Spangler said.

He said sections of belly meat from walleye have been sent to Ohio State for extensive examination. “It’s important to note that they are conducting this testing on fish meat, as opposed to any other tissue from the fish, and they’re not finding any evidence of the toxin produced by this algae.”

Mr. Spangler, who lives in Carroll Township and had firsthand experience dealing with the microcystin-related water issues there a year ago, said the strong, sustained winds out of the north and northeast from early last week likely played a major role in the current water crisis in Toledo.

“Those winds really concentrated the algae in Maumee Bay and the western end of Lake Erie,” he said. “The area around Maumee Bay State Park is nasty looking. The algae is so thick in the marina, it looks like you could walk across it.”

Mr. Spangler said he was out on Lake Erie Thursday and Friday, and found “crystal clear” water northwest of West Sister Island, but the winds likely caused dense concentrations of the algae to collect at the Toledo water intake.

“I think the wind just stacked it up in the worst possible place,” he said. “But we shouldn’t really be shocked by this — Mother Nature has been waving a big, red flag about this issue for quite a while, and it looks like nobody was watching or paying attention.”

The Columbus Dispatch

Toledo issues water warning over algae toxin

By John Seewer *Associated Press* • Sunday August 3, 2014

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP) — Long lines formed at water distribution centers and store shelves were quickly emptied of bottled water after Ohio’s fourth-largest city told residents not to drink from its water supply that was fouled by toxins possibly from algae on Lake Erie.

The warning effectively cut off the water supply to 400,000 people in Toledo, most of its suburbs and a few areas in southeastern Michigan.

Worried residents told not to drink, brush their teeth or wash dishes with the water emptied store shelves and waited hours for deliveries of bottled water from across Ohio as the governor declared a state of emergency.



John Seewer | Associated PressA

Aundrea Simmons stands next to her minivan with cases of bottled water she bought after Toledo warned residents not to use its water.

Gov. John Kasich pledged that state agencies were working to bring water and other supplies to areas around Toledo while also assisting hospitals and other businesses impacted. The state also was making plans to make more deliveries if the water problem lingered, he said.

“What’s more important than water? Water’s about life,” Kasich said. “We know it’s difficult. We know it’s frustrating.”

The governor said it was too early to say how long the water advisory will last or what caused toxins to spike suddenly in the drinking water.

“We don’t really want to speculate on this,” Kasich told The Associated Press. “When it comes to this water, we’ve got to be very careful.”

Samples of water were flown to the federal and state Environmental Protection Agency offices in Cincinnati and Columbus and a university in Michigan for additional testing, officials said.

Residents waking up to the warning on Saturday morning lined up outside just about any store selling water. Some were mothers concerned about how they would make formula for their infants and others were worried about their elderly parents.

“It looked like Black Friday,” said Aundrea Simmons, who stood in a line of about 50 people at a pharmacy before buying four cases of water.

Families toting empty coolers, milk jugs and even cookie jars topped them off with well water funneled out of the back of a pickup truck.

John Myers, a farmer from nearby Swanton, loaded 450 gallons of well water into a container in the back of his pickup truck and gave it out for free in a high school parking lot.

“The more you got, the more we’ll fill,” he told residents carrying empty containers. “I never thought I’d see the day that I’d be giving water away.”

Myers said his concern was that the advisory could go on for days. “This is a lot more serious than anybody’s thinking about,” he said.

Tyshanta DeLoney, of Toledo, filled up a big plastic container after spending much of the day searching for water. “That was a blessing,” she said.

Late Saturday, Kasich ordered the state’s National Guard to deliver water purification systems, pallets of bottled water and meals ready to eat, or MREs, to residents in Lucas, Wood and Fulton counties.

Toledo issued the warning just after midnight Saturday after tests at one treatment plant showed two sample readings for microcystin above the standard for consumption. The city also said not to boil the water because that would only increase the toxin’s concentration. The mayor also warned that children should not shower or bathe in the water and that it shouldn’t be given to pets.

The first tests indicating trouble came Friday night and additional testing confirmed the elevated readings, said Craig Butler, director of the state’s Environmental Protection Agency.

Water coming from the lake into Toledo’s water plant had relatively low toxicity levels this summer compared with a year ago until this sudden spike.

Algae blooms during the summer have become more frequent and troublesome around the western end of Lake Erie, the shallowest of the five Great Lakes.

The algae growth is fed by phosphorus mainly from farm fertilizer runoff and sewage treatment plants, leaving behind toxins that have contributed to oxygen-deprived dead zones where fish can’t survive. The toxins can kill animals and sicken humans.

Scientists had predicted a significant bloom of the blue-green algae this year, but they didn’t expect it to peak until early September.

The state began delivering water to the Toledo area Saturday afternoon. Containers were being filled with water at a prison near Columbus and trucked about 130 miles north, said Nancy Dragani, director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency.

The state also asked major grocery chains to divert as much water as they can to northwest Ohio, she said. The Ohio National Guard planned to send units that can turn pond water into drinkable water to three hospitals and a state prison in Toledo.

As truckloads of water came in from across the state, Toledo leaders set up distribution centers at schools around the city, limiting families to one case of bottled water. Some stores were receiving new shipments of water and putting limits on how much people can buy.

“We’re going to be prepared to make sure people are not without water,” said Toledo Mayor D. Michael Collins.

There were no reports yet of people becoming sick from drinking the water, Collins said.

Stores in cities up to 50 miles away were reporting shortages of bottled water. Some neighboring communities that aren’t connected to Toledo’s water system were offering their water to people who brought their own bottles and containers.

Operators of water plants all along Lake Erie, which supplies drinking water for 11 million people, have been concerned over the last few years about toxins fouling their supplies.

Almost a year ago, one township just east of Toledo told its 2,000 residents not to drink or use the water coming from their taps. That was believed to be the first time a city has banned residents from using the water because of toxins from algae in the lake.

Most water treatment plants along the western Lake Erie shoreline treat their water to combat the algae. Toledo spent about \$4 million last year on chemicals to treat its water and combat the toxins.



Day 2: Still no drinkable water for 400,000 in Ohio

A toxin discovered in a northwestern Ohio treatment plant left 400,000 people without drinkable tap water for a second day Sunday.

Residents of Toledo, its suburbs and small areas of southeastern Michigan began lining up for water after news of the contamination surfaced Saturday. Ohio Gov. John Kasich declared a state of emergency for Lucas, Wood and Fulton counties and deployed the National Guard to get water and meals ready to eat, or MREs, to the area.

"What's more important than water? Water's about life," Kasich said. "We know it's difficult. We know it's frustrating."

The governor said it was too early to say how long the water advisory will last or what caused toxins to spike suddenly in the drinking water.

"We don't really want to speculate on this," Kasich said. "When it comes to this water, we've got to be very careful."

In a news release, the city of Toledo said the toxins likely came from harmful algae blooms in nearby Lake Erie.

"These organisms are capable of producing a number of toxins that may pose a risk to human and animal health," the release said.

Samples of water were flown to the federal and state Environmental Protection Agency offices in Cincinnati and Columbus and a university in Michigan for additional testing, officials said.

News of the contaminated water touched off a shopping frenzy at area stores for bottled water and bags of ice. Shelves were emptied of bottles and other water supplies, as residents prepared for the worst. Stores in cities up to 50 miles away were reporting shortages of bottled water.

"It looked like Black Friday," said Aundrea Simmons, who stood in a line of about 50 people at a pharmacy before buying four cases of water.

"First and foremost, residents must remain calm," Toledo Mayor Michael Collins said at a morning press conference.

Toledo officials issued the warning early Saturday after tests at the city's Collins Park Water Treatment Plant showed two sample readings for microcystin above the standard for consumption.



(Photo: Jetta Fraser, AP)

Officials said the water is not for drinking or cooking but healthy adults could still use the water for bathing. They warned children not to bathe or swim in it, as they might drink the water accidentally. Residents were warned not to boil the water because it will only increase the toxin's concentration. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and upset stomach.

Area zoos and restaurants closed, and the University of Toledo closed Saturday with all non-health-care functions canceled. Toledo Lucas-County Public Libraries also announced closings.

Collins pleaded with residents not to panic. There were no reports yet of people becoming sick from drinking the water, Collins said.

Meanwhile, other municipalities were making their own arrangements. Luna Pier, Mich., officials were making plans to funnel water from Monroe Township, according to the Free Press. Fire trucks will pick up the water and residents will be able to fill water bottles after noon Saturday.

Operators of water plants all along Lake Erie, which supplies drinking water for 11 million people, have been concerned over the last few years about toxins fouling their supplies.

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Most water treatment plants along the western Lake Erie shoreline treat their water to combat the algae. Toledo spent about \$4 million last year on chemicals to treat its water and combat the toxins.

Contributing: Associated Press

Showering Declared Potential Hazard in Toledo, Ohio

TOLEDO, Ohio - Residents of Ohio's fourth largest city are now being warned about potential hazards from taking a shower.

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department said late Saturday that, at the urging of the Centers for Disease Control, it is advising that those with liver disease should avoid showering. This applies only to those who get their water service from the city of Toledo's water treatment plant.

The department now also says that those with sensitive skin may want to avoid showering because the water could cause irritation, reports CBS affiliate [WTOL](#) in Toledo.

The health department had originally advised it was safe for affected residents to bathe.

Long lines formed at water distribution centers and store shelves were quickly emptied of bottled water after [Toledo officials told residents not to drink from its water supply](#) that was fouled by toxins possibly from algae on Lake Erie.

The warning effectively cut off the water supply to 400,000 people in Toledo, most of its suburbs and a few areas in southeastern Michigan.

Worried residents told not to drink, brush their teeth or wash dishes with the water emptied store shelves and waited hours for deliveries of bottled water from across Ohio as the governor declared a state of emergency.

Gov. John Kasich pledged that state agencies were working to bring water and other supplies to areas around Toledo while also assisting hospitals and other businesses impacted. The state also was making plans to make more deliveries if the water problem lingered, he said.

"What's more important than water? Water's about life," Kasich said. "We know it's difficult. We know it's frustrating."

The situation in Toledo has also prompted officials in Chicago to re-test the water being pumped in there from Lake Michigan, reports the [Chicago Tribune](#).

The governor said it was too early to say how long the water advisory will last or what caused toxins to spike suddenly in the drinking water.

"We don't really want to speculate on this," Kasich told The Associated Press. "When it comes to this water, we've got to be very careful."

Samples of water were flown to the federal and state Environmental Protection Agency offices in Cincinnati and Columbus and a university in Michigan for additional testing, officials said.



PlayVideo

CBS Evening News

Toledo residents warned against toxins in water

The residents of Toledo, Ohio, have been told not to drink or use water after contamination affected the system. Officials say a recent test at a...



This satellite image provided by NOAA shows the algae bloom on Lake Erie in 2011 which according to NOAA was the worst in decades. The algae growth is fed by phosphorus mainly from farm fertilizer runoff and sewage treatment plants, leaving behind toxins that have contributed to oxygen-deprived dead zones where fish can't survive. The toxins can kill animals and sicken humans.

AP Photo/NOAA

Residents waking up to the warning on Saturday morning lined up outside just about any store selling water. Some were mothers concerned about how they would make formula for their infants and other were worried about their elderly parents.

"It looked like Black Friday," said Aundrea Simmons, who stood in a line of about 50 people at a pharmacy before buying four cases of water.

Families toting empty coolers, milk jugs and even cookie jars topped them off with well water funneled out of the back of a pickup truck.

John Myers, a farmer from nearby Swanton, loaded 450 gallons of well water into a container in the back of his pickup truck and gave it out for free in a high school parking lot.

"The more you got, the more we'll fill," he told residents carrying empty containers. "I never thought I'd see the day that I'd be giving water away."

Myers said his concern was that the advisory could go on for days. "This is a lot more serious than anybody's thinking about," he said.

Tyshanta DeLoney, of Toledo, filled up a big plastic container after spending much of the day searching for water. "That was a blessing," she said.

Late Saturday, Kasich ordered the state's National Guard to deliver water purification systems, pallets of bottled water and meals ready to eat, or MREs, to residents in Lucas, Wood and Fulton counties.

Toledo issued the warning just after midnight Saturday after tests at one treatment plant showed two sample readings for microcystin above the standard for consumption. The city also said not to boil the water because that would only increase the toxin's concentration. The mayor also warned that children should not shower or bathe in the water and that it shouldn't be given to pets.

The first tests indicating trouble came Friday night and additional testing confirmed the elevated readings, said Craig Butler, director of the state's Environmental Protection Agency.

Water coming from the lake into Toledo's water plant had relatively low toxicity levels this summer compared with a year ago until this sudden spike.

Algae blooms during the summer have become more frequent and troublesome around the western end of Lake Erie, the shallowest of the five Great Lakes.

The algae growth is fed by phosphorus mainly from farm fertilizer runoff and sewage treatment plants, leaving behind toxins that have contributed to oxygen-deprived dead zones where fish can't survive. The toxins can kill animals and sicken humans.

Scientists had predicted a significant bloom of the blue-green algae this year, but they didn't expect it to peak until early September.

The state began delivering water to the Toledo area Saturday afternoon. Containers were being filled with water at a prison near Columbus and trucked about 130 miles north, said Nancy Dragani, director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency.

The state also asked major grocery chains to divert as much water as they can to northwest Ohio, she said. The Ohio National Guard planned to send units that can turn pond water into drinkable water to three hospitals and a state prison in Toledo.

As truckloads of water came in from across the state, Toledo leaders set up distribution centers at schools around the city, limiting families to one case of bottled water. Some stores were receiving new shipments of water and putting limits on how much people can buy.

"We're going to be prepared to make sure people are not without water," said Toledo Mayor D. Michael Collins.

There were no reports yet of people becoming sick from drinking the water, Collins said.

Stores in cities up to 50 miles away were reporting shortages of bottled water. Some neighboring communities that aren't connected to Toledo's water system were offering their water to people who brought their own bottles and containers.

Operators of water plants all along Lake Erie, which supplies drinking water for 11 million people, have been concerned over the last few years about toxins fouling their supplies.

Almost a year ago, one township just east of Toledo told its 2,000 residents not to drink or use the water coming from their taps. That was believed to be the first time a city has banned residents from using the water because of toxins from algae in the lake.

Most water treatment plants along the western Lake Erie shoreline treat their water to combat the algae. Toledo spent about \$4 million last year on chemicals to treat its water and combat the toxins.

Ottawa County water is safe for now

Kristina Smith, mksmith@gannett.com 12:44 p.m. EDT August 2, 2014

PORT CLINTON – While toxins from Lake Erie harmful algae shuttered Toledo's drinking water supply today, the Ottawa County Sanitary Engineer is concerned the county water plant could have the same problem in the coming weeks.

If the toxic algae continues to move east on Lake Erie and send high levels of the toxin microcystin, a nerve toxin that can cause liver problems and gastrointestinal illness, into drinking water, the Ottawa County plant could also have to shut down until it can deal with the problem, Ottawa County Sanitary Engineer Kelly Frey said this morning.

Ottawa County started planning for a situation like this recently and had a meeting scheduled Tuesday at the county's emergency management agency with its largest water users, local hospitals and county officials for how to handle a similar situation before the Toledo problem arose. The meeting is the first of its kind in Ohio, Frey said.

"This is a crisis," said Frey, who for more than a year has been warning that something like what happened in Toledo was very likely. "It's very frustrating. Everything (Ohio Environmental Protection Agency) and the city of Toledo are doing today is reactive."

The Carroll Township water plant shut down for a few days in September after it saw high levels of the toxin at the plant.

There are no state or federal regulations for testing for microcystin or for how to remove it from drinking water. Normal water treatment processes don't remove the toxin, so plants have spent the past few years trying to determine what works best to get rid of it, Frey said.

Ottawa County's water treatment plant serves Oak Harbor and 8,000 customers in Danbury, Catawba, Portage, Bay, Erie and Salem townships, Frey said. It also sells the city of Port Clinton drinking water, he said. If Ottawa County should have to close its plant, officials plan to shut off the county's three water towers to keep the toxin from getting into that water supply. Locals could then go to the towers and fill jugs of water, Frey said.

"We'll have several spigots set up," he said.

The county would work with Port Clinton and Oak Harbor to shut off their towers and provide the same service to their customers, Frey said.

He also recommends locals keep at least three days' worth of water on hand at home.

Ottawa County is in a better position than Toledo because Toledo does not have water towers, Frey said. The Toledo water plant closure affects about 400,000 customers in Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan.



"I feel we're going to be OK," Frey said. "The problem that we're having, though is, how long is this going to last?"

Last month, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration gave its annual forecast for how bad the harmful algae in Lake Erie's Western Basin would be this year. On a scale of one to 10 with 10 being the worst, scientists said the bloom would be a five or six.

They said the bloom would not be as bad as last year or the 2011 bloom, which was the worst on record.

For details, check back.



Monroe County Residents Affected By Toledo Water Emergency

August 2, 2014

MONROE COUNTY (WWJ) — A handful of communities in southern Monroe County, on the northern side of the Michigan/Ohio state line, have been impacted by Saturday's water emergency issued in Toledo, as they are also serviced by the Toledo Water system.

Mike Bosanac with the Monroe County emergency management office said that tanker trucks of non-potable, non-drinking water are currently being made available at the Bedford Township Hall and the Luna Pier Fire Department.

"The alert from Toledo has been upgraded so adults can bathe and shower in the water — still can't ingest it," Bosanac said. "But for children, they don't want them bathing in the water. That's the reason to make sure that we're getting at least clean, non-potable water into those communities so kids can be cleaned and bathed in the water, if needed."

Established water filling stations allowing residents to obtain potable water will open at 10 a.m. on Sunday, if the emergency continues. Stations are located at Ida Township Hall, Manufacturer's Market Place/Hardwood Plaza in Monroe and the Frenchtown Water Plant in Monroe.

Residents must bring their own containers to fill. Prior to use, residents are encouraged to boil the water if the containers are not considered potable.

Authorities in Toledo issued an alert around 2 a.m. Saturday, warning residents not to consume any of its water after tests revealed the presence of a toxin possibly related to algae on Lake Erie. The warning applies to about 400,000 people in the area. By the afternoon, Ohio's governor had declared a state of emergency.

The advisory also applied to a few Michigan communities that receive water from Toledo — Bedford Township, Erie Township, La Salle Township and Luna Pier.

"We understand that it is restricted to there, for those people who are affected by the Toledo Water supply system," Bosanac said. "The rest of Monroe County, there's not an issue with that and it's not affecting well water — it's the water supply from the Toledo intake."

About 11,500 households across the state line were impacted and under the "do not drink" order, leading to bottled water being in short supply.

“Most of the water is all gone from any of the retail stores,” Bosanac said. “What water was there is long gone now.”

In addition to water being brought to the Township Hall and Fire Department, Bosanac said that tanker trucks were used to help those living in group homes and assisted living facilities and is working to get a larger source of bottled water available to people in the affected areas.



CITY OF TOLEDO

UPDATE: Do-not-drink water advisory issued for City of Toledo, in effect until further notice

Written by Staff Reports | | news@toledofreepress.com

The City of Toledo issued an urgent water advisory early Saturday morning. The advisory is still in effect as of Sunday.

City of Toledo residents and regional residents (including portions of Lucas, Wood, Fulton and Monroe counties) who receive water from the city are asked to not drink city water until further notice, including water that has been boiled. Water should also not be given to pets.

Toledo Mayor D. Michael Collins reiterated around 9 a.m. Sunday that no test results are back yet.

“Gathering samples took longer than expected,” he said via Twitter. “Factual info will be relayed when we have it.”

The early-Saturday notice came after water tests at the city’s Collins Park Water Treatment Plant had two sample readings for microcystin in excess of the recommended standard.

According to the U.S. EPA [website](#), microcystins are toxins produced by cyanobacteria — also known as blue-green algae. Cyanobacteria “are ubiquitous in surface water when conditions are favorable for growth and formation of algal blooms. Cyanobacteria release toxins upon cell death or lysis. When released, toxins may persist for weeks to months. ... While the liver is the primary target of microcystins, it is also a skin, eye and throat irritant.”

Water from the City of Oregon was not affected, according to Oregon Mayor Michael Seferian.

The City of Toledo is giving away one case of water per family at Waite High School and Central Catholic High School. [Toledo News Now](#) is tracking additional locations giving away water.

A number of area businesses are closed as a result of the advisory. Toledo Zoo, Toledo Lucas-County Public Libraries and University of Toledo (UT) are closed today. All non-health care functions for UT have been cancelled. All Toledo Public Schools athletic activities for today were also canceled.

Many area restaurants will also be forced to close today.

“The only exception is facilities that can guarantee no consumption of tap water,” according the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department.

More updates below.

UPDATE (9:45 a.m.):

At a 9:30 a.m. press conference, Mayor D. Michael Collins said Gov. John Kasich is heading to Toledo and is expected to arrive between 1 and 1:30 p.m.

Collins said water tests continue but more are needed. The first analysis shows improvements.

“Everything trending in positive direction,” he said, but the water advisory still stands.

UPDATE (9:30 a.m.):

The Toledo Zoo will open today at 10 a.m. The zoo provided an update [via Facebook](#) that the animals are fine and it is using water reserves.

“None of them has shown any signs of sickness related to the water situation, though we continue to monitor them closely,” the post said.

UPDATE (9:15 a.m.):

UPDATE (9 a.m. Sunday):

Mayor Collins has reportedly been on a conference call with Ohio Governor John Kasich, EPA officials and others for much of the morning. Local officials are standing by for word on test results.

UPDATE (11 p.m. Saturday):

Mayor Collins said more water samples are being sent for testing as EPA wants to see how numbers fluctuated through the day.

Dr. David Grossman, director of the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department, said people with liver or skin conditions may still want to avoid showering, but overall things have been smooth from health standpoint.

Another update is expected around 7-7:30 a.m.

Water distribution will resume at Oregon fire stations at 8 a.m. Sunday. Distribution will resume at Waite, Woodward, Central Catholic and Springfield high schools at 9 a.m.

Those who are homebound and need water delivered can call American Red Cross of Northwest Ohio at (419) 329-6060 starting at 8 a.m.

UPDATE (9 p.m.):

As of 9 p.m., the EPA test results of water samples sent to Cincinnati, Columbus and Michigan have not been returned. Mayor D. Michael Collins does not expect full test results for at least another nine hours.

“I want the community to know that everything is being done that is humanely possible,” Collins said. Water distribution sites have been set up at Waite High School, Woodward High School, Central Catholic High School and Springfield High School. They will close at 11 p.m. tonight and reopen in the morning. The exact time was not available.

Collins said FEMA has been notified as well as members of Congress.

“I don’t think we’ll ever be back to normal, but this is not going to be our new normal,” he said. “We will fix this. We’re not going to abandon anyone. That is common sense. We’ll reach out to those who need our support.”

Collins took the opportunity at the press conference to call attention to the algae problem in Lake Erie, the source of the water problem.

“This world is really right now at our window looking in. And this is not acceptable,” he said. “We’re 20 percent of the fresh water supply of our planet and we’re not going to standby.”

UPDATE (7:45 p.m.):

No water results yet, mayor’s Chief of Staff Bob Reinbolt just told media. “We have no test results yet that show any definitive results,” he said. Results now expected by 9 p.m.

UPDATE (7 p.m.):

The American Red Cross of Northwest Ohio, Lucas County Emergency Management Agency and other local and government officials and community partners are coordinating to activate volunteers to assist with bulk distribution of water to the communities affected by the recent water ban in Fulton, Lucas and Wood Counties, according to a news release from the Red Cross.

Distribution sites supplied by local government and staffed by Red Cross volunteers will be available for each family to receive one case of water at the following locations:

Springfield High School, 1470 S. McCord Road, Holland, 6-11 p.m.
Woodward High School, 701 E. Central Ave, Toledo, 6-11 p.m.
Central Catholic High School, 2550 Cherry St, Toledo, 4-11 p.m.
Waite High School – 301 Morrison Drive, Toledo, 4-11 p.m.

Individuals who are homebound can call (419) 329.6060 and be placed on a distribution list for delivery of water to their place of residence. Volunteers will be available to answer phones at the local Red Cross office until 9 p.m. tonight and tomorrow beginning at 8 a.m. should the ban still be in effect.

People can donate by visiting redcross.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS, or texting the word REDCROSS to 90999 to make a \$10 donation. Your donation helps provide food, shelter and emotional support to those affected by disasters. Individuals wishing to make small in-kind donations may take them to the O.D.O.T. distribution Center at 4080 Technology Dr., Maumee.

UPDATE (5 p.m.):

Toledo News Now reporting via Oregon Fire Chief: Water distribution at station No.3 on Bay Shore closing at 6 p.m. Other two Oregon stations open till 9 p.m. All three open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. tomorrow.

UPDATE (4:25 p.m.):

Eight semi trucks filled with bottled water are making their way to local churches and organizations to help with the water crisis.

Cherry Street Mission, 1Matters and EnPuzzlement, which is part of a national network called HEH, have partnered to provide water to Cherry Street Mission, Hope Community Church, Crossroads Community Church and more, said Ken Leslie of 1Matters.org.

A load of water is set for arrival at 7 a.m. Aug. 3. These distribution sites are not open to the public but are for the church congregants and those who receive assistance from participating organizations.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which partners with 1Matters.org, will give water to 22 invalid or shut-in veterans, Leslie said.

“There’s no need for the community to panic,” Leslie said. “If they do see a further need it will be taken care of. They are an excellent group who are pulling things together really well. The mayor is leading the charge. Our community is coming together.”

UPDATE (3:15 p.m.):

Per Bedford Township Supervisor Greg Stewart and Monroe County Emergency Management Specialist Susan Martinez:

City of Monroe Water Department and Frenchtown Water Department are assisting residents in Monroe County impacted by the water emergency by distributing potable water. They have established water filling stations to allow residents to obtain potable water at the following locations:

Ida Township Hall, 3016 Lewis Ave, Ida, Michigan
Manufacturer’s Market Place/Hardwood Plaza (North of McDonald’s), 14930 LaPlaisance Road, Monroe, Michigan
Frenchtown Water Plant, 5300 North Dixie Hwy, Monroe, Michigan

Residents must bring their own containers to fill. Prior to use, residents are encouraged to boil the water if the containers are not considered potable.</div>

Per Swancreek Rural Water District Trustee Mark Fowler:

Water distribution points already set up at Delta, Lyons, Swanton and Wauseon fire departments.

Beginning at 3 p.m. today, Swancreek Township Hall at Fulton County roads D and 5-2 will have water for distribution.

Beginning at 6 p.m. today, Swanton Middle School on Cherry Street in Swanton will have water for distribution.

Water will be available at least through tonight (Saturday).

Water trustees ask that water distribution be limited to 5 gallons per person. Also any water district customer who has friends, family or neighbors with working water wells are encouraged to seek water from them. The Lake Erie microcystin problem that has caused the City of Toledo to advise water customers to not consume tap water does not affect water wells, Fowler said.

UPDATE (2:45 p.m.):

The City of Toledo issues a press release just after 2:30 p.m.

The Do Not Drink Advisory is still in place.

The Governor has issued Lucas County and surrounding Ohio communities as a State of Emergency. The Governor, City of Toledo, Lucas County Emergency Management Agency, Lucas

County, surrounding cities, law enforcement, and health and safety personnel are working to resolve this issue as quickly as possible.

The distribution system is being established, which will include resupply of that distribution system as needed. We are asking residents if they already have water, please continue with your day, and allow residents without water to be able to purchase water.

Our distribution centers are being coordinated with American Red Cross. This is for emergency water only. If you already have bottled water at home, do not come to the distribution center. One case of water per family will be distributed.

Distribution centers are being established at the following times and locations:

5:00 P.M.

Central Catholic High School, 2250 Cherry Street, Toledo, Ohio 43608

Waite High School, 301 Morrison Drive, Toledo, Ohio 43605

6:00 P.M.

Woodward High School, 701 East Central Avenue, Toledo, OH 43608

Springfield High School, 1470 South McCord Rd, Holland, OH 43528

Water stations that are open now are:

Oregon Fire Department Station #1 located at 5002 Seaman Rd

Oregon Fire Department Station #2 located at 1102 S. Wheeling St

Oregon Fire Department Station #3 located at 4421 Bayshore Rd

Village of Whitehouse Fire Department located at 10550 Waterville Street

Residents are being asked to check in on their home-bound neighbors and share water with them if possible.

Our samples from our treatment plant have been air lifted to testing sites in Columbus and Cincinnati. To ensure public safety additional tests are being done at outside locations. We expect our results in a few hours.

We reiterate that the following is still in effect:

1. It is safe for healthy adults to bathe, wash their hands, and shower. While bathing, children should be under the supervision of an adult to prevent accidental drinking of the water.
2. Do not drink tap water until the all clear is given, this also includes pets.
3. Do not use tap water to cook until the all clear is given.
4. Do not boil tap water.
5. It is ok to use and flush your toilet.

Water Information Hotline – 419-936-2020

UPDATE (2 p.m.):

At an 1:45 p.m. press conference, Mayor D. Michael Collins said water sample is currently being tested in Cincinnati. He spoke with the governor and another sample is en route to Michigan.

At 3:30 p.m., another sample will be sent to Columbus to be tested.

“We will have 3 independent sources to test this water,” he said.

The mayor also said the Ohio National Guard is working to transport water to the area.

“As soon as we know where they are, where the water is, we will provide that water to you,” instead of waiting in lines, he said.

“We have water coming from Columbus, Delaware, Cincinnati, Akron,” he said. “We will be sure that every family is accommodated with water.”

UPDATE (12:45 p.m.):

Swan creek Rural Water District, which serves much of eastern Fulton County with water it buys from Toledo, is meeting this afternoon to discuss options for getting water to its customers while Toledo sorts out its water contamination problem, said water district trustee Mark Fowler.

Those options include getting a supply from surrounding municipal water systems, such as Swanton, Delta or Wauseon, or bringing in a tanker truck or a supply of bottled water, for distribution to water customers at various points around the district's service area, he said.

Even after Toledo clears up its problem, he said, there is the matter of clearing the affected water out of the district's network of water lines, which cover most of eastern Swan creek Township in Fulton County and stretching north to Metamora on the Michigan line.

“We're talking millions of gallons of water” sitting in the pipes that must be cleared out by an influx of safe water, he said.

The water district's network feeds off a 24-inch water main running direct from Toledo's water system to the NorthStar steel plant west of Delta.

Fowler said he recommended rural water customers make arrangements with neighbors who still draw water from ground wells if they can.

“It's a limited supply but (most wells) should be able to (sharing) handle five gallons or so,” he said.

For every resident in the district's service area who is tied into the water system, Fowler said,

According to a groundwater resource map that is part of the Fulton County Water Supply and Demand Analysis final report published in July 2012, the groundwater in the eastern part of Swan creek Township comes from a layer of carbonate rock supplying 100 to 500 gallons per minute.

However, north of Swanton, in an area also supplied by the Swan creek district, the ground turns to shale and the groundwater supply quickly drops to 3-10 gallons per minute.

Going west, the central part of the county is a vast stretch of glacial sand, gravel and clay supplies 3-10 gallons a minute until reaching the northwest part of the county, where groundwater supplies rise again to 100-500 gallons a minute.

UPDATE (11:45 a.m.):

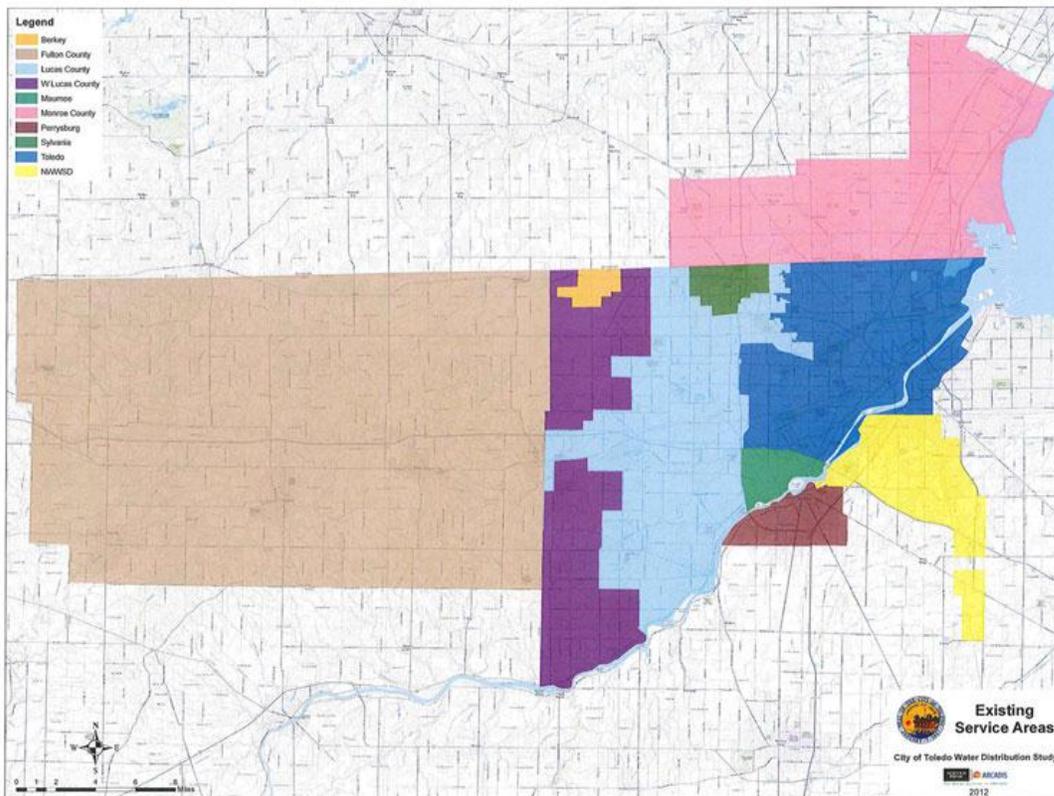
The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department issued a statement at 11:40 a.m. for all restaurants and food facilities. “Due to the Do Not Drink Water Advisory, we are strongly recommending that restaurants and food facilities temporarily suspend their operations. The only exception is facilities that can guarantee no consumption of tap water.”

At an 11:45 a.m. press conference, Mayor D. Michael Collins said water test results are expected by 7 p.m. Saturday and no illnesses have been reported so far. State of Emergency for Lucas County has been declared by the state of Ohio. The City of Toledo will start setting up distribution centers at schools, he said. One case of water per family to start.

UPDATE (11:30 a.m.):

Gov. John Kasich has declared a State of Emergency for all areas which receive water from the City of Toledo.

Here is a map from the City of Toledo:



Map courtesy City of Toledo.

The Department of Public Utilities provides 26 billion gallons of high-quality drinking water a year to 500,000 people through 125,000 residential, commercial and industrial accounts in Lucas, Wood and Fulton Counties in Ohio, and Monroe County, Michigan.

On Facebook, the City of Toledo **advised residents**: “Any method that the water can be ingested is not advised. This includes washing dishes, vegetables, etc. Filtration systems, such as carbon filters, will not remove the toxins.”

From the *Bedford Now*: Residents in Monroe County started buying water off shelves at 4 a.m after the City of Toledo issued its water warning. The Monroe County residents included in the alert are those from South County Water district which serves Bedford and Erie Townships, Luna Pier and portions of LaSalle Township. The City of Monroe is not included in the alert, along with Whiteford and Frenchtown Townships. They have different water systems.

For Swanton residents: Water customers immediately surrounding Swanton's municipal system either take their water from ground wells — said to be safe — or from the Swancreek Rural Water District, which buys water from Toledo. A recorded message at the Water District's office, located in the Swancreek Township office on County Road D near Delta, told callers that testing was being done at throughout the water district's system, including at the connection point at the Fulton-Lucas County line. Water district customers were told to follow all advisories from Toledo regarding their water.

UPDATE (11 a.m.):

The Mayor's office in Luna Pier said it has made arrangements to funnel water from Monroe Township. Fire trucks will pick up the water and residents will be able to fill water bottles after noon today.

UPDATE (10:30 a.m.):

Toledo Zoo will be closed today. University of Toledo announces it will be closed today and all non-health care functions have been cancelled. All Toledo Public School athletic activities for today have been cancelled. Toledo Lucas-County Public Libraries will be closed today.

Many area restaurants will also be forced to close today. Officials are recommending that if your business uses water in any way that you remain closed today.

Wood County Emergency Management is working to provide bottled water to Rossford residents. Pick-up locations to be announced soon by Rossford Police.

Oregon Mayor Michael Seferian said people can bring jugs to fill water at fire stations at 1102 South Wheeling, Seaman and Wynn, and on Bayshore Road.



Bottled water is sold out from store shelves including Kroger in Swanton. Toledo Free Press Photo by Don Lee.

UPDATE (10 a.m.):

At a 9:30 a.m. press conference at Lucas County Emergency Management Building, City of Toledo Mayor D. Michael Collins said the city is testing the water and will keep the media up to date.

“First and foremost, residents must remain calm,” he said.

Collins said the water is not safe for consumption or cooking, but is safe for healthy adults to use the water for bathing.

Health Department Commissioner Dr. David Grossman said kids shouldn’t bathe in this because they splash the water around and may consume it.

Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, upset stomach, according to Grossman. Anyone who exhibits these symptoms should contact his or her doctor.

“We’re testing the water. We’ll have updated test results later this afternoon,” said Lisa Ward, Collin’s spokesperson. “We are currently working to restore water supplies and working on a different water distribution.”

Ward said updates will occur throughout the day.

The water has been contaminated by large, algae blooms on Lake Erie, where the city takes its water, Ward said.

Stay tuned to this post, along with Twitter and Facebook for more information.

The full original press release from the city is below:

URGENT NOTICE TO RESIDENTS OF TOLEDO & LUCAS COUNTY WHO RECEIVE WATER FROM THE CITY OF TOLEDO

DO NOT DRINK THE WATER

DO NOT BOIL THE WATER

Chemists testing water at Toledo’s Collins Park Water Treatment Plant had two sample readings for microcystin in excess of the recommended “DO NOT DRINK” 1 microgram per liter standard. This notice applies to ALL customers of Toledo water.

Most importantly, water should not be consumed until an all clear is issued. It is important to state that this drinking water alert does NOT recommend boiling, and in fact, boiling water can worsen the situation. Water should not be given to pets.

Additional information as to where to obtain water will be forthcoming, steps will be taken to provide drinkable water if necessary.

What should you do?

DO NOT DRINK THE WATER. Alternative water should be used for drinking, making infant formula, making ice, brushing teeth and preparing food. Pets should not drink the water.

DO NOT BOIL THE WATER. Boiling the water will not destroy the toxins – it will increase the concentration of the toxins.

Consuming water containing algal toxins may result in abnormal liver function, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, numbness or dizziness. Seek medical attention if you feel you have been exposed to algal toxins and are having adverse health effects. Skin contact with contaminated water can cause irritation or rashes. Contact a veterinarian immediately if pets or livestock show signs of illness.

What happened? What is being done?

Lake Erie, which is a source of drinking water for the Toledo water system may have been impacted by a harmful algal bloom (HAB). These organisms are capable of producing a number of toxins that may pose a risk to human and animal health. HABs occur when excess nitrogen and phosphorus are present in lakes and streams. Such nutrients can come from runoff of over-fertilized fields and lawns, from malfunctioning septic systems and from livestock pens.

Additional monitoring is being conducted and we will let you know when the situation has been resolved or if additional precautions should be taken. The water system is running additional tests to verify the severity of the microcystin levels in our water supply.

Please stay tuned to media for more information and share this information with friends, family or neighbors that may not have been informed through this media release. A phone number for the public to call will be included in a future release.