

November 21, 2024

FAQs for Water System Customers Regarding the USACE's Drawdown Operations

What is the US Army Corps' (USACE) drawdown operation?

The U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon issued an interim injunction requiring the Corps to implement specific measures to improve fish passage at several Willamette Valley reservoirs, including Green Peter and Lookout Point. The USACE is currently implementing the drawdown operation (lowering the water levels) at these reservoirs. USACE web page: <https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Locations/Willamette-Valley/Injunction/>

Is my water system affected by the drawdown?

The following public water systems are affected:

Downstream of Green Peter Reservoir:

- City of Sweet Home (PWS #00851)
- City of Lebanon (PWS #00473)
- City of Albany (PWS #00012)

Downstream of Lookout Point Reservoir:

- City of Lowell (PWS #00492)

How is the drawdown impacting my drinking water?

The reservoir drawdown increases the turbidity (cloudiness) of the water downstream of the reservoirs, which can be worsened by rain and storm events. This may challenge water systems' treatment processes and, in some cases, result in finished

water with color or odor. These changes do **not pose any health risks**, and the water remains safe to drink.

Why is there color in my water?

The drawdown can lead to an increase in organics and inorganics in the water:

Organics: Decaying vegetation can stain the water, giving it a brownish appearance.

Inorganics: Naturally occurring minerals like iron and manganese may increase, causing discoloration.

Is the discoloration harmful?

No. Discolored water is safe to drink as long as it has been treated to the regulatory standards. Water providers continuously monitor water quality and will issue a public notice if the water is unsafe for consumption.

Why does my water smell different?

Adjustments to treatment methods or chemical dosages during the drawdown process can affect the taste and smell of water. Despite these changes, the water remains safe to drink. Water providers will notify customers if the water becomes unsafe.

Why does my water smell like chlorine?

Chlorine is added during the treatment process to disinfect water before distribution. During the drawdown or weather events leading to high turbidity levels, some water systems may temporarily increase chlorine dosages to address changes in water chemistry which could result in stronger chlorine smell in water.