



## **FAQ REGARDING WATER ISSUE ON CAMPUS**

The New York State and Ulster County Departments of Health (DOH) have run tests on the Village of New Paltz water supply, and all tests show no detectable levels of petroleum compounds. The DOH has determined that water can be used for drinking and all other purposes.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Village of New Paltz, which supplies campus water, immediately issued a do not drink advisory on Monday, Feb. 10, following reports of an odor detected in the village's drinking water. The source of the odor was a fuel oil spill from a compromised underground fuel line for the village's water treatment plant heating system. The state Department of Environmental Conservation Spill Response experts are overseeing the cleanup of the spill that compromised Reservoir #4. The village bypassed the affected reservoir on Sunday, Feb. 9.

Flushing of the water distribution system occurred throughout the day Wednesday, Feb. 12, to move fresh water through the distribution system. Additional samples collected Thursday, Feb. 13 confirmed no detectable levels of petroleum compounds, allowing the "do not drink" advisory to be lifted on Friday, Feb. 14.

When the drinking water advisory was issued by the Village of New Paltz, the State of New York provided fresh water, in the form of both bottled and bulk water, (which included two 6,700 gallon water tankers, one 500 gallon water buffalo and 36 pallets of bottled water) which was delivered to campus and available to all students, faculty and staff. SUNY New Paltz chose to cancel classes and send resident students home on Feb. 11 out of an abundance of caution, and in the interest of the health and safety of our students. The source of the odor was not confirmed at that time.

Resident students, commuter students, faculty and staff do not need to take further action. Taps, water fountains, sinks and other fixtures are safe to use.

Campus community members are encouraged to contact Michael Malloy, Director of Environmental Health and Safety, at x2385 if they encounter unusual odors or tastes in tap water. We will ensure those affected water appliances get additional flushing.

## **Resources:**

- <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-do-not-drink-advisory-lifted-new-paltz-water-system>
- <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-provides-updates-bringing-new-paltz-water-system-back-line>
- <https://www.villageofnewpaltz.org>
- <https://www.health.ny.gov>

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We have received the following questions from members of our community:

- **Will there be changes to the academic calendar?**

Stay tuned for more information on Monday, Feb. 17.

- **Is the water really safe to use?**

Yes, the New York State Department of Health (DOH) has run tests on the Village of New Paltz water supply, and all tests showed no detectable levels of petroleum compounds. The DOH has determined that water can be used for drinking, and will continue to monitor and test the water to ensure it is safe to use.

- **What was wrong with the water?**

On Monday, Feb. 10, Village of New Paltz residents reported odors from their tap water. Out of an abundance of caution, the Village leadership issued an advisory to all residents, which includes campus, to not drink the water. Various New York state, county and local agencies were deployed to investigate the cause of the odor.

Numerous samples were taken from throughout the water system, and sent to NYS labs for testing. After extensive testing and both before and after flushing of the water system, the DOH deemed the water safe for drinking.

- **Where did the reported odor originate?**

The spill was determined to be the result of a compromised underground fuel line for the village's water treatment plant heating system. The Department of Environmental Conservation Spill Response experts are overseeing the cleanup of the spill that compromised Reservoir #4. The village is bypassing this reservoir during the clean up.

- **Was the water supply switched?**

Reservoir #4, located on Mountain Rest Road, has been isolated from the water system.

- **Is flushing needed in each hall?**

Flushing has occurred in every building on campus. If further flushing is needed because users encounter unusual smells or tastes, please contact Michael Malloy.

- **What was the timeline of testing and when was it deemed safe to shower?**

The Village of New Paltz issued a "Do Not Drink" advisory on Feb. 10. At that time, State DOH deemed safe bathing and washing of hands, clothing and dishes.

- **Why was there a difference in the volume/content of information shared on town page vs. the campus?**

The College receives its water supply from the Village of New Paltz. The Village of New Paltz and state officials were the official sources of information for this matter. The campus consistently directed the campus community to those sources. The campus provided campus-specific information.

- **What are the dining locations & hours for Sunday, Feb. 16?**

See CAS website for latest dining hours

- **Why were students asked to leave campus?**

SUNY New Paltz chose to cancel classes and send resident students home on Feb. 11 out of an abundance of caution, and in the interest of the health and safety of our students. The source of the odor was not confirmed at that time. The College was open during this time, and staff, in conjunction with help from state agencies worked hard to support the remaining students on campus, and make sure the College was ready for the return of all students on Monday, Feb. 17.

- **What is the best way to share official info with parents/family?**

View the College home page for the latest updates. Consider adding parents or loved ones to NPAlert, and share official campus emails.

- **What do I do if I smell an odor from the tap?**

Please notify Mike Malloy, Director of Environmental Health and Safety, at x2385 if you notice anything unusual with the water as we return to normal operations.