



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Niagara Falls Water Board Update on COVID-19 Postpones Water Shutoffs; Addresses Water Safety, Toilet Paper Substitutes**

The Niagara Falls Water Board recognizes that this is a stressful time for our community and for the customers we serve. Please know that we are here for you and are committed to taking all steps necessary to maintain safe, reliable water and wastewater service.

### **Drinking Water Safety**

Please know that you can continue normal use of tap water.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that Americans continue to use and drink tap water as usual. COVID-19 has not been detected in drinking water supplies, and the Water Board rigorously monitors drinking water quality using state-of-the-art laboratory equipment.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): "Conventional water treatment methods that use filtration and disinfection, such as those in most municipal drinking water systems, should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19." The World Health Organization adds that the "presence of the COVID-19 virus has not been detected in drinking-water supplies and based on current evidence the risk to water supplies is low."

Handwashing using tap water is critical to preventing the spread of COVID-19. CDC and other health organizations recommend frequent handwashing for at least 20 seconds each time. Up-to-date information from EPA on COVID-19 and water can be found [here](#).

### **Do Not Flush Wipes, Paper Towels, Napkins**

Due to shortages of toilet paper, many people have purchased substitutes such as baby wipes. Please do not flush any toilet paper substitute and remember that your toilet should not be used as a trash can. Do not treat other items like toilet paper. Please do not flush paper towels, "flushable" wipes, napkins, tampons, cotton balls, dental floss, or other substances. Flushing nonbiodegradable items can result in backups and overflows, and expensive plumbing bills for property owners.

### **Water Board Preparedness**

Please know the Water Board remains prepared to keep safe water flowing. We are well-prepared to continue providing water service throughout this pandemic and have been developing plans to address

this evolving situation. We have staff and infrastructure in place to maintain service around the clock to help keep families healthy, clean, and hydrated.

### **Customer Service, Meter Shop Appointments, and Cross-Connection Inspections**

The Water Board has suspended most in-person appointments. Most service requests can be handled via phone. Rather than appearing in-person at the Water Board's offices, customers are to call (716) 283-9770 and select Option No. 1 to speak with a customer service representative. **If you are quarantined or sick and call for a service request or to report an emergency, please tell us about the conditions at the time that you call.** Water Board staff will work with you to determine the best course of action regarding your service.

### **Postponing Water Shutoffs for Non-Payment**

Given the importance of hygiene and sanitation to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we are postponing water shutoffs due to non-payment for occupied properties until further notice. Water service will be shutoff only in situations where it is necessary to protect health or property.

### **Conclusion**

The Water Board's Board of Directors and staff appreciate the public's continued patience and cooperation during this time. As conditions evolve, so will our procedures. Our thoughts are with all of those who are being impacted.

For more information on the NFWB, go to: [www.NFWB.org](http://www.NFWB.org).

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### **About the Niagara Falls Water Board:**

The Niagara Falls Water Board is a public benefit corporation created in 2002 by a special act of the New York State Legislature. Its mission is to provide safe and reliable water and wastewater management services to our community in an economical and efficient manner. In 2003, it acquired the drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems previously owned and operated by the City of Niagara Falls, a separate municipal entity. It owns and operates a water treatment plant, a wastewater treatment plant, a pumping station located in the Niagara Gorge, two elevated water storage tanks, seven lift stations, and more than 500 miles of water and sewer service lines. The Water Board serves nearly 18,000 residential, commercial, and industrial users.