



**CITY OF THE DALLES**  
Department of Public Works  
1215 West 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
The Dalles, Oregon 97058

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## PRESS RELEASE

**DATE:** July 17, 2020

**TOPIC:** Wastewater Treatment Plant Discharge Continues to Exceed *E. coli* Limit

**CONTACT:** Public Works Department (541) 296-5401

**FOR RELEASE:** IMMEDIATELY

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Operations at the City of The Dalles Wastewater Treatment Plant continue to improve but are not yet back in compliance after a recent plant upset that resulted in discharge to the Columbia River of treated wastewater exceeding the plant's limit for *E. coli*.

A problem with the aeration system was identified. Changes to the system have resulted in improvement. The City has added several loads of healthy biological process liquor to boost the treatment process. These measures are expected to restore the biological balance so that the plant can quickly return to normal operations.

The ultraviolet disinfection process remains ramped up to maximum capacity in an attempt to compensate for partially treated effluent due to the upset. Staff has increased the frequency of effluent sampling until *E. coli* counts are back within permit limits.

Recent Columbia River samples show that *E. coli* levels at the sample locations were well below bacterial [criteria](#) set by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality for freshwater recreation.

<b>E. coli in recreational waters</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
DEQ Criteria OAR 340-041-0009 Bacteria	126.0 MPN/100L (90-days)	406.0 MPN/100L
Results from samples taken between Columbia River Mile 186.5 and 189.5 on July 15, 2020	4.1 MPN/100L	6.3 MPN/100L

MPN = Most Probably Number

As a precaution, signs will remain in place at locations of public river access until the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant returns to compliance. Signs are posted on the Oregon shore of the Columbia River, from The Dalles Riverfront Park to West Mayer Park boat launch. The signs say: "Warning - Contaminated Water - No water contact" and give phone numbers to call for information.

The Department is in communication with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and local health department officials to coordinate response. Questions can be directed to the Public Works Department office at (541) 296-5401.

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