



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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WAPA ISSUES BOIL WATER ADVISORY FOLLOWING DETECTION OF E. COLI

Customers Advised to Boil Water for One Minute or Use Bottled Water Until Further Notice

ST. CROIX, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (August 28, 2026) – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA) is issuing a Tier 1 Public Notification and Boil Water Advisory following the detection of E. coli bacteria in drinking water samples collected from the distribution system at Sample Point 327, Frederiksted Dock.

Customers should NOT drink the water without boiling it first. As a precaution, all water intended for drinking or other household uses listed below should be brought to a boil for **one minute** and allowed to cool before use. Bottled water may be used as an alternative.

IMPORTANT: This advisory is not related to the current Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority wastewater issue in Christiansted.

WAPA is issuing this advisory as a precaution following the detection of E. coli in samples collected in Frederiksted. Low water pressure in the Frederiksted area can create conditions that increase the potential for contaminants to enter the distribution system, particularly where leaks, breaks or other points of vulnerability may exist. WAPA is investigating distribution-system conditions, including low or absent chlorine residuals, and conducting additional sampling to determine the source of the bacteriological concern.

BOIL YOUR WATER BEFORE USING

Until further notice, boiled or bottled water should be used for:

- Drinking
- Making ice
- Brushing teeth
- Preparing food and beverages
- Washing dishes

Do not consume tap water unless it has been boiled for one minute or replaced with bottled water.

Why Is This Advisory Being Issued?

A routine water sample collected on August 24, 2026, at Sample Point 327 (Frederiksted Dock) tested positive for Total Coliform and E. coli.

Follow-up samples collected on August 26 showed that Sample Point 327 remained positive for Total Coliform and E. coli. Samples collected at the designated upstream location, Sample Point 052 (Hannah's Rest), and downstream location, Sample Point 077 (Frederiksted Ballpark), were negative for both Total Coliform and E. coli.

Additional samples were collected on August 28 from all three locations, and those results are currently pending.

Because E. coli was detected in the routine sample and again in the repeat sample at Sample Point 327, WAPA is issuing this Tier 1 Public Notification as a precaution to protect public health.

What Does E. coli Mean for Your Health?

E. coli is a type of bacteria whose presence in drinking water indicates that the water may have been contaminated with human or animal waste. Such contamination may include disease-causing organisms.

Exposure to contaminated water may cause symptoms such as diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea, headaches, and other gastrointestinal illnesses.

Infants, young children, older adults, and people with severely compromised immune systems may be at greater risk of serious illness.

Anyone experiencing persistent symptoms should seek medical advice. Individuals at increased health risk should consult their healthcare providers regarding drinking water during the advisory.

WAPA's Response

WAPA has initiated corrective actions and increased monitoring in response to the positive bacteriological results.

The Authority is:

- Conducting additional bacteriological sampling;
- Evaluating low or absent chlorine residuals observed in the affected area;
- Conducting flushing as appropriate;
- Reviewing distribution-system conditions; and
- Coordinating with the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR).

WAPA will continue monitoring and corrective actions until the bacteriological concern has been resolved.

When Will the Advisory Be Lifted?

The Boil Water Advisory will remain in effect until follow-up testing demonstrates that the bacteriological concern has been resolved and WAPA, in coordination with DPNR, determines that the advisory may be lifted.

Customers should **continue boiling water for one minute or using bottled water until WAPA announces that the advisory has been lifted.**

For more information, please contact Andrew Jackson, Environmental Affairs Manager, at Andrew.jackson@viwapa.vi or 340-773-2250 ext. 3038.

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About WAPA: The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority is an autonomous agency of the Virgin Islands Government which produces and distributes electricity and drinking water to residential and commercial customers in the territory. WAPA was created by the Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands in 1964 through Act No. 1248. Today, WAPA generates electrical power at production plants on St. Thomas and St. Croix and distributes electrical service through smart grids to customers on St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John, Hassel Island, and Water Island. Potable water is distributed to almost 13,000 customers through water lines and standpipes. WAPA also has the responsibility of installing and maintaining streetlights.