



Frequently Asked Questions

Why does the Sanitary Board need to issue another permit?

Valicor has a valid permit for wastewater treatment in Huntington. The Sanitary Board asked Valicor to apply for a new, additional permit to allow for additional oversight and control over the processing of water from East Palestine, Ohio. Valicor is one of several industrial customers of the Sanitary Board.

Is this water dangerous?

No. It has been extensively treated in Ohio and certified safe to be delivered to Valicor's facility in Huntington, where it will be sanitized a second time before being tested and then trucked to Huntington's wastewater treatment facility for a third and final processing, testing analysis and ultimate discharge into the Ohio River.

Is this a risk to our drinking water system?

There is no risk. Huntington's drinking water is provided by West Virginia American Water. West Virginia American Water maintains an entirely separate network of processing facilities and pipes to deliver drinking water to its customers.

Will our drinking water supply be contaminated?

West Virginia American Water provides our area's drinking water. The location where the treated wastewater would enter the Ohio River is downstream of West Virginia American's water intake, so the two water streams will not cross paths.

Is this water a risk to the environment? The Ohio River?

No. Before the water is discharged into the Ohio River it will have been treated in Ohio by Norfolk Southern's contractors, by Valicor, and finally by the city's wastewater treatment plant in Huntington. It will undergo extensive testing after each treatment. All three entities as well as the federal, state and local agencies providing oversight have a shared goal and responsibility of ensuring this water is safe to be returned to the environment.

Are treatment plant workers at a greater health risk?

The staff at the water treatment facility is well-equipped and trained to handle this project, which, with the exception of additional testing, is identical to the normal course of business.

Why is Huntington even involved?

Valicor was selected to handle this project because of its long history of processing contaminated water successfully. The Huntington Sanitary Board provides final treatment and discharge for multiple industrial customers, including Valicor, every day.

Thus far, water samples from the East Palestine site appear to be well within the parameters of the treatment services normally provided by the Sanitary Board. The permit process will confirm this, or else the work will not be done at Huntington. The permit is a necessary step, and ongoing testing will ensure all parameters of the permit are met.

Aren't the Sanitary Board facilities in need of repair?

Our facility will soon undergo a significant upgrade to increase our capacity. The facilities as they now stand are perfectly capable of successfully handling this work.

Is the Sanitary Board getting paid for this service?

The Sanitary Board charges all industrial clients for processing their wastewater. That is appropriate and reflects the level of service required.

Valicor will also be required to cover the cost of extraordinary expenses, such as additional testing by certified labs, related to the sensitive nature of this project.

Would you drink this water?

Drinking water is treated and handled differently than wastewater, which is what the Sanitary Board processes. Drinking water supplies are separate and apart from this water treatment.

Should people downstream of the discharge point be drinking this water?

Yes, this water will be like any other water source that ends up in the drinking water supply system. It will be treated, verified as safe and healthy, and then returned to its source, in our case the Ohio River. Companies like West Virginia American prepare drinking water for consumption.

As the responsible party, is Norfolk Southern paying for this?

The railroad contracted with Valicor for wastewater treatment services and been transparent in providing the Sanitary Board information about its on-site process and testing. The Sanitary Board is permitting and contracting with Valicor, not Norfolk Southern.

Are we going to have long-term issues because our facilities are treating this water?

No. Out of an abundance of caution, water treated by Valicor will arrive at the Huntington wastewater plant via truck. The city's pipe and other infrastructure will not be involved.

Is the water being treated going to smell?

No.

How are neighbors of the water treatment facility going to be impacted?

There will be additional truck traffic, and we are working with Valicor to minimize any extra noise and traffic in neighborhoods around the treatment facility.

For additional questions or concerns please submit to:
pretreatment@huntingtonsb.com