



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jessica Emmett Sellers, Public Information Officer
Communications & Marketing Department
(254) 750-7039
JessicaE@wacotx.gov
waco-texas.com

Rains and Power Outage Cause Wastewater Overflows

WACO, TEXAS (May 2, 2024) – The City of Waco experienced heavy rainfall that caused rainwater and diluted wastewater to overflow at several manholes. Additionally, a power outage (due to a surge in power line voltage) caused an overflow and partially treated wastewater discharge from the outfall at the Waco Metropolitan Area Regional Sewerage System (WMARSS) Central Wastewater Treatment Plant. Combined, the City estimates the overflow volume at 3,498,000 gallons.

Manholes

Heavy rains caused overflows at several manholes around the city. Containment efforts are ongoing at the time of the notice. Since rain has slowed, the overflows are expected to be contained soon. Estimated volume of the manhole overflows is 110,000 gallons.

WMARSS Central Wastewater Treatment Plant

At 9:00 a.m. the treatment plant's main breaker tripped from the electrical surge, and the plant lost power. The two backup generators at the plant were unavailable. One was down for maintenance and the second due to burned electronics (likely from a power surge or lightning strike). Immediately following the power outage, an overflow occurred at the main lift station for the plant discharging 163,000 gallons of rainwater and diluted wastewater. The overflow lasted about 10 minutes—the time it took for operators to switch power sources and start bypass pumps (utilizing rented emergency generators) for the lift station. The rest of the plant was still without power.

At 10:10 a.m., Oncor staff were on-site to correct the power issue. At 11:15, power was fully restored to the plant.

During the approximate 2 hour power outage at the plant, an estimated 3,225,000 gallons of partially treated wastewater were discharged from the plant outfall into the river. The Brazos River at this location was flowing at an approximate rate of 7.8 million gallons per minute at the time of the discharge.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jessica Emmett Sellers, Public Information Officer
Communications & Marketing Department
(254) 750-7039
JessicaE@wacotx.gov
waco-texas.com

Please refer to the following page for the official Texas Commission on Environmental Quality notice regarding this event.

Media questions about this wastewater discharge should be directed to Jessica Emmett Sellers, Utilities Public Information Office, (254) 750-7039 or (254) 405-7024.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jessica Emmett Sellers, Public Information Officer
Communications & Marketing Department
(254) 750-7039
JessicaE@wacotx.gov
waco-texas.com

**Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Public Notification of Wastewater Discharges**

WACO, TEXAS (May 2, 2024) Notice: An unauthorized discharge or spill of wastewater has occurred from a City of Waco collection facility and system.

Facility Name: Waco Metropolitan Area Regional Sewerage System Central Plant

Person to contact for information: Kendall Borg, (254) 750-2451

Location(s) of spill: Waco Metropolitan Area Regional Sewerage System Central Wastewater Treatment Plant located at 1147 Treatment Plant Road

Contained and ceased manhole overflows (at time of notice)

- 17166 Skeet Eason Rd.
- 5201 Flat Rock Rd.
- 1720 Maple Ave.
- 400 N. 24th St.
- 4900 Erath St.

Ongoing manhole overflows (at time of notice)

- 401 N. 4th St.
- 2636 Cedar Ridge Rd.
- 5230 Lake Shore Dr.
- 2749 Cedar Ridge Rd.
- 5400 Lake Shore Dr.
- 1100 University Parks Rd.
- 1924 N. 12th St.
- 401N. Spring Street
- 1000 Trice Rd.
- 1908 N. 12th St.
- 1315 N. 34th St.
- 529 N. 36th St
- 916 N. Valley Mills Dr.
- 810 N. 31st St
- 900 Richland Dr.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jessica Emmett Sellers, Public Information Officer
Communications & Marketing Department
(254) 750-7039
JessicaE@wacotx.gov
waco-texas.com

Estimated date and time of spill: May 2, 2024 beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ongoing at time of notice

Estimated volume of spill: 3,498,000 gallons total

- 163,000 gallons at Main Lift Station
- 3,225,000 gallons of partially treated effluent
- 26,700 gallons at manholes stopped at time of notice
- 81,000 gallons at manholes ongoing at time of notice

Type of spill: Domestic Sanitary Sewer

Description of area potentially affected, including down gradient and lateral distance from spill site: Directly to the Brazos River and tributaries of the Brazos River

Suspected cause(s) of the spill: power outage and heavy rain inundating the sanitary sewer system

List of actions taken including but not limited to:

Notification of:

- Appropriate local government officials have been notified.
- TCEQ Regional Office has been notified.

Containment of spill:

- Wastewater treatment plant is fully operational as of May 2 at 11:15 a.m.
- Staff utilized bleach in the area and chlorine tablets in the waste stream.
- Increased monitoring of water supply as a precautionary measure



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jessica Emmett Sellers, Public Information Officer
Communications & Marketing Department
(254) 750-7039
JessicaE@wacotx.gov
waco-texas.com

Precautionary Statement

Anyone downstream of this location should take the precautions below and monitor their system. The City of Waco's water supply and water quality have not been affected by this situation. City of Waco Water Laboratory staff conduct over 6,000 water quality tests annually.

As required by TCEQ, we recommend the following precautionary measures for:

- 1) Persons using private drinking water supply wells located within ½ mile of the spill site or within the potentially affected area should use only water that has been distilled or boiled at a rolling boil for at least one minute for all personal uses including drinking cooking, bathing, and tooth brushing. Individuals with private water wells should have their well water tested and disinfected, if necessary, prior to discontinuing distillation or boiling.
- 2) Persons who purchase water from a public water supply may contact their water supply distributor to determine if the water is safe for personal use.
- 3) The public should avoid contact with waste material, soil, or water in the area potentially affected by the spill.
- 4) If the public comes into contact with waste material, soil, or water potentially affected by the spill, they should bathe and wash clothes thoroughly as soon as possible.