

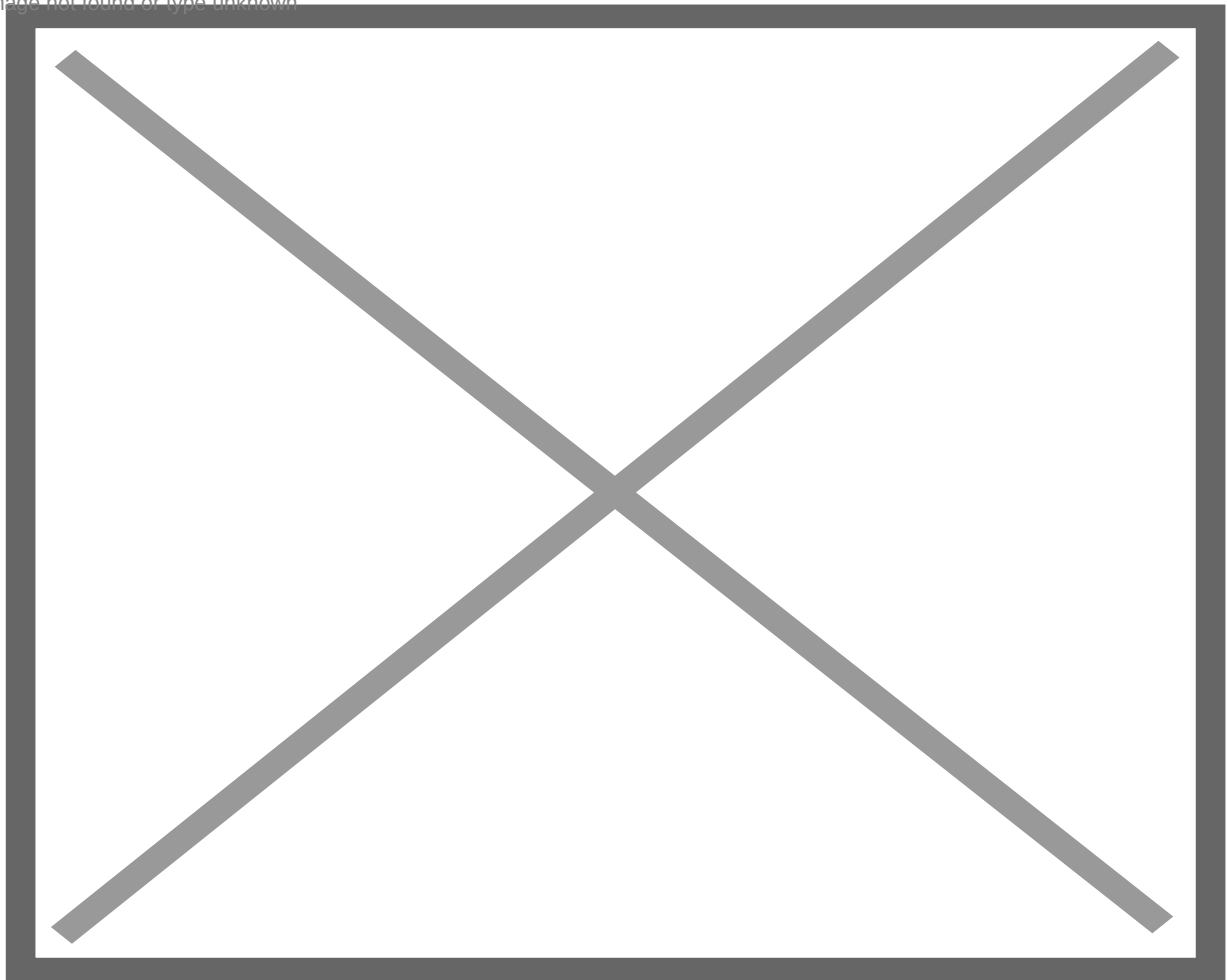
WAPA Resumes St. Croix Water Production; Pressure Recovery to Be Gradual as Boil Advisory Remains

WAPA says reverse-osmosis production has resumed at Richmond after water-quality testing cleared the intake, but pressure will recover gradually across St. Croix. The island remains under a boil-water advisory, and conservation measures stay in effect.

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WAPA's Richmond Water Storage Tank. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

ST. CROIX — Water production has resumed at WAPA's Richmond reverse-osmosis facility following repairs to a ruptured Christiansted wastewater force main and subsequent water-quality testing, but the authority says normal water pressure will return gradually across St. Croix and the island-wide boil-water advisory remains in effect.

The V.I. Water and Power Authority announced late Sunday that conditions at the Richmond intake were suitable for production to restart after the V.I. Waste Management Authority repaired the damaged force main Sunday morning and water-quality testing was completed.

WAPA [had suspended](#) reverse-osmosis production at Richmond as a precaution following the wastewater infrastructure failure.

Water storage levels at the facility have already begun recovering, according to the authority, and customers closest to Richmond are expected to experience improvements in pressure first.

Full service, however, will not return immediately. WAPA said it is deliberately limiting pumping capacity to “avoid placing sudden pressure on the aging distribution system, which could cause additional leaks or breaks” and potentially slow the overall restoration effort.

Christiansted customers should begin seeing improved pressure by Monday morning. Recovery will take longer in Frederiksted and other portions of western St. Croix because water must move through several pumping stations before reaching the Kingshill storage tank, which supplies the western portion of the island.

WAPA is asking residents to continue conserving water while storage levels and distribution pressures recover. Customers are being encouraged to postpone non-essential water use, run dishwashers and washing machines only with full loads, take shorter showers and turn off faucets when water is not actively being used.

The authority also urged residents not to use potable water to fill cisterns and not to stockpile or hoard large quantities of potable water.

St. Croix standpipes will remain closed until further notice, meaning commercial water haulers must continue using alternative sources for the time being.

The island also remains [under a boil-water advisory](#). Residents should not use tap water for drinking, cooking, making ice or brushing teeth unless it is first brought to a rolling boil for at least one minute and then allowed to cool.

WAPA said [emergency water-distribution operations](#) implemented during the supply disruption will now be evaluated, with information on whether they will continue or end to be provided to the public.

The authority is also asking customers to remain alert for leaks throughout the distribution system and report them immediately by telephone or through WAPA’s online service portal.

WAPA emphasized that the Christiansted wastewater force-main rupture that prompted the Richmond shutdown is separate from the detection of E. coli bacteria in drinking-water samples in Frederiksted. The E. coli findings are the basis for the continuing boil-water advisory.

WAPA said it will continue monitoring storage levels, water pressure and distribution-system conditions and provide further updates as the system stabilizes.