

Warsaw sewage plant malfunction contaminates Vistula river

August 29 2019



This photo taken May 18, 2012 shows aerial view from a hot air balloon of downtown Warsaw, Poland and Poland's biggest river, the Vistula. A sewage system's malfunction is sending huge amounts of refuse into the river in a situation that authorities are describing as "crisis." (AP Photo/Czarek Sokolowski/File)

Polish authorities on Thursday were warning residents in cities along the Vistula river that runs into the Baltic Sea of a "crisis" situation after

Warsaw's new sewage collection plant malfunctioned.

The [health minister](#) and [local authorities](#) said they have been closely monitoring the levels of contamination north of the Polish capital, including by nitrogen, since the problem began late Tuesday, but wouldn't disclose the results of the tests. The sewage is being discharged at about 3,000 liters (nearly 800 gallons) a second at Warsaw's northern edge and goes north without affecting the city's waters, authorities said.

"There is no reason for panic and there is no threat to the health of Warsaw residents," Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski said.

Other officials were speaking in the central city of Plock, about 110 kilometers (68 miles) north of Warsaw, which was bracing for a wave of contaminated water.

Health Minister Lukasz Szumowski advised people not to fish or bathe in the Vistula and to boil water before use, even for brushing teeth.

Experts were working to fix the malfunction at the sewage plant, which will take longer than three days, according to Trzaskowski.

It wasn't immediately clear what caused the sewage collection system, including an emergency backup, to fail.



Environment experts take samples of the Vistula river waters at the site where they are being contaminated with sewage after the city's main sewage treatment plant malfunctioned, in Warsaw, Poland, Thursday, Aug. 29, 2019. The contaminated water is flowing north toward the Baltic Sea and residents on its route have been warned. (AP Photo/Czarek Sokolowski)

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