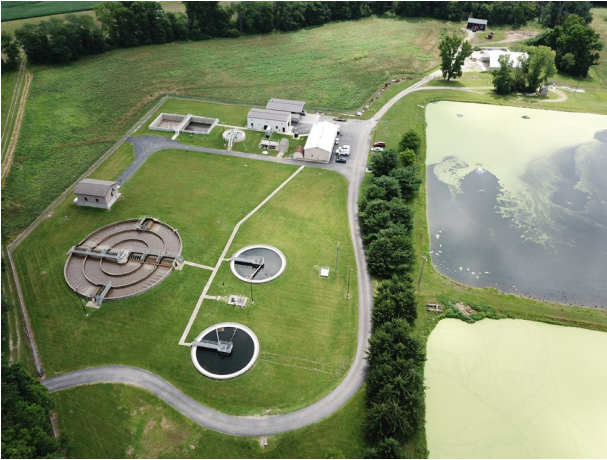


Pataskala Utilities Department

COVID-19 Wastewater Testing



The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Health has established a program to test various wastewater plants in an attempt to gather more accurate numbers in regard to the COVID-19 infection rates of the citizens serviced by those collections systems. The Pataskala Utility Department has actively requested to be included in this testing program, and as of September 29, we were accepted.

Let me give you a little information on how this testing works. Individuals who have been infected with COVID-19 will have genetic material from the virus in their waste. This material is not a live virus but is pieces of the virus' RNA (the virus version of DNA). That genetic material enters the wastewater collection system and eventually makes its way to the Water Reclamation Facility. There, samples of the wastewater will be taken and sent to a professional lab to be analyzed. The results will be used by the CDC, the EPA, and local health departments as an additional indicator of COVID-19 trends in the community.

One of the exciting features of this test is that asymptomatic people (those who have been infected but show no symptoms) will still put the COVID-19 virus RNA into the waste stream, giving a more accurate representation of the infection rate in our community than relying on people to decide to get tested for medical reasons. This testing also shows the disease trends 4-7 days sooner than clinical indicators, such as new cases and hospitalizations. Results of the testing will be posted on the State of Ohio coronavirus website: www.coronavirus.ohio.gov under the COVID-19 Dashboard.

The costs of this program will be covered by the federal CARES act, which means that none of your sewer bill will need to be used for this. Our wastewater operators will simply collect bi-weekly samples, fill out the appropriate documentation, and send the samples off to the lab.

Information about this virus is the most important tool that we have. I am so very excited that the Pataskala Utility Department was selected to participate in the program. We feel humbled to be able to help in the understanding of how the COVID-19 virus works and how it spreads through communities. Even more exciting is the concept that perhaps information learned from our wastewater stream could eventually be instrumental in saving somebody's life.



We are happy to answer any questions at: Utilities Department, 430 South Main St, 740-964-6275

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"Clean Water In, Clean Water Out"