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Treatment Plants May Be Hit With Supply Chain Issues After Fire Destroys Chemical Manufacturer



By [Peter Chawaga](#)

After a warehouse explosion and subsequent fire consumed an Illinois chemical manufacturing facility, the drinking water and wastewater treatment industry might face new challenges in conducting their work.

“The Carus facility in LaSalle is the only producer of potassium permanganate and sodium permanganate in the Western Hemisphere,” according to the [U.S. EPA](#). “Water and wastewater systems that receive chemicals that are produced at the Carus facility in LaSalle may experience supply chain disruptions, and the domestic market for these chemicals will likely experience challenges until the lost production capacity is restored.”

[Permanganate](#) is an oxidate used to control taste, odor, color, and biological growth, and to remove iron and manganese. And without it, treatment plants may struggle to perform critical functions.

“Potassium permanganate is one of the more common products used by water-treatment plants in their multi-pronged strategy for purifying water,” the [Toledo Blade](#) reported. “Although the United States imports some of its potassium permanganate from India, the Carus plant is by far the largest for U.S. production of it. The plant also produces other chemicals used by water-treatment and sewage plants.”

In Ohio, a state beset by [toxic algae problems](#), that means preparing for a worst case scenario come bloom season.

“Plant officials (in Toledo) are now thinking about cutting back on or suspending their use of potassium permanganate this winter, to the degree that’s possible, to ensure they’ll have enough on hand for the summer bloom season, when it’s going to be more needed,” per the *Blade*.

The EPA recommended that drinking water and wastewater treatment operations contact their chemical suppliers to see if they may be impacted by the incident, consider contacting alternate suppliers, and explore mutual aid and assistance opportunities if they are unable to secure the chemicals they need to protect consumers and the environment.

To read more about how drinking water and wastewater treatment utilities overcome accidents and disasters visit Water Online’s [Resilience Solutions Center](#).



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