**How water crisis in Flint, Mich., became federal state of emergency**

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2016/01/19/michigan-flint-water-contamination/78996052/>

USA TODAY NETWORK**Compiled by Jessica Durando, USA TODAY Network***10:34 a.m. EST January 20, 2016*

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder gave a [State of the State address](http://on.freep.com/1V4WdMy)Tuesday night, following remarks he made a day earlier on how he's made mistakes in handling the Flint, Mich., water crisis. "I'm sorry and I will fix it," Snyder said near the opening of his speech, directly addressing the residents of Flint. "Government failed you at the federal, state and local level." The state downplayed and [largely ignored](http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/columnists/nancy-kaffer/2016/01/11/flint-lead-water/78629628/) the immediate complaints about the [smell, color and taste of the water in 2014](http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/columnists/nancy-kaffer/2016/01/11/flint-lead-water/78629628/).

Here's what you need to know about how the public health crisis has evolved:

**1. When did the water become contaminated?**

Flint's drinking water became contaminated with lead in April 2014 while the city was under the control of a state-appointed emergency manager. As a cost-cutting move, the city began temporarily drawing its drinking water from the Flint River and treating it at the city water treatment plant while it waited for a new water pipeline to Lake Huron to be completed. Previously, the city used Lake Huron water treated by the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department. The state Department of Environmental Quality has conceded it failed to require needed chemicals to be added to the corrosive Flint River water. As a result, lead leached from pipes and fixtures into the drinking water.

**2. Who has been exposed to lead?**

Anyone who drank city tap water was exposed to lead, but children are more susceptible to lead poisoning than adults. Eden Wells, Michigan's chief medical executive, said recently that [all children who drank the city's water](http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/contributors/raw-data/2016/01/16/map-8657-flints-youngest-children-exposed-lead/78818888//) since April 2014 have been exposed to lead. That's 8,657 children, based on Census data. "It is important when we think about a public health perspective that we consider the whole cohort ... exposed to the drinking water, especially 6 years and under since April 2014, as exposed, regardless of what their blood level is on Jan. 11." The [state's most recent report](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/Flint_Blood_Testing_Report_December_23_509464_7.pdf), based on tests conducted between October and December 2015, shows that 43 people — only a small portion of the number exposed — had elevated blood lead levels. That's because these tests measure only the amount of lead in a person's blood, which decreases after about 30 days, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That means testing done today does not represent past exposure.

**3. Is there a safe level of lead in the body?**

There is no safe level of lead in the body, but the impacts of lead are considered most severe on the developing brains and nervous systems of children and fetuses. And even the 8,657 Flint children younger than [six exposed to lead may be a low estimate](http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/contributors/raw-data/2016/01/16/map-8657-flints-youngest-children-exposed-lead/78818888//); It doesn't include unborn children whose mothers drank tainted water during their pregnancies, or children and pregnant women who reside outside Flint but were exposed while visiting relatives, childcare centers or hospitals inside city limits.

**4. When did state, federal governments intervene?**

It was not until Jan. 5 that Snyder declared a state of emergency and Jan. 12 that he mobilized the National Guard to assist with distribution of bottled water and water filters. Although the state helped Flint switch back to Detroit water in October, danger remains because of damage the Flint River water did to the water distribution system. President Obama declared a federal state of emergency in Flint on January 16.

**5. What does the federal state of emergency mean for Flint?**

Some $5 million in federal aid has been [freed up to immediately assist with the water crisis](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/local/michigan/2016/01/16/president-obama-declares-emergency-flint/78898604/). However, President Obama denied Synder's request for a disaster declaration.

The president's actions authorize the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to coordinate responses and cover 75% of the costs for much-needed water, filters, filter cartridges and other items for residents, capped initially at $5 million.

Typically, federal aid for an emergency is capped at $5 million, though the president can commit more if he goes through Congress.

*Write a 2 paragraph summary about this article. Use a web or graphic organizer to put together your thoughts. You must also cite this source!*

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* Did I indent my paragraphs?
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* Did I correctly cite the source of information? Refer to Purdue Owl if you need help with this.
* Do I think I met the expectations of Mrs. Heins? \*Remember she has high expectations!

