



SPECIAL REPORT

2025 UPDATE ON CITY WATER FOUNTAINS

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BACKGROUND

In August 2024, the City Controller’s Office released a report on the working status of water fountains in use throughout the City of Pittsburgh. This report was prompted by concerns that the City only employed one plumber in the Department of Public Works (DPW) and relied on this employee to turn on the water fountains across the city.

Councilman Bobby Wilson put forth a legislative response to address the shortage of qualified plumbers in the City workforce, an issue essential to maintaining the operation of Pittsburgh’s public water fountains. In response, City Council passed **Bill 2024-0602**, a resolution authorizing the City to enter into agreements with licensed plumbers, plumbing firms, or other entities to help alleviate the critical shortage and ensure the continued maintenance of essential water infrastructure.

In May 2025, Deputy Mayor Jake Pawlak stated that there are “three plumbers on staff, plus an apprentice,” reassuring citizens by saying that the Administration is “feeling much [better] about our ability to get it done.”¹ At the time of this report being released, there are three plumbers within DPW Facilities on the City payroll.

With “over 200 drinking fountains”² in the City and a summer already breaking heat records, residents are concerned about the functionality of water fountains this season. This report is a follow-up to the Controller’s report from last year and aims to update Pittsburgh residents on the status of the water fountains in their communities.

FINDINGS

Inspectors from the Controller’s office visited 28 water fountains at locations across the City from Monday, June 16, 2025 to Friday, June 20, 2025. Of the 28 fountains tested, inspectors found that 16 (57%) were operational, and 12 (43%) remained off.

All 20 water fountains inspected in 2024 were tested again this year. Two fountains that were off last year were turned on this year (Wightman Park and McBride Park), while three fountains that were on last year were not working this year (Bloomfield Pool & Recreation Center, Osceola Playground, and Garland Park). Of the 20 re-examined water fountains, 12 were operational and eight were non-operational – a decline from last year’s finding that 13 were operational and seven were non-operational.

In addition to the 20 water fountains tested last year, the inspectors reviewed eight new fountains in five different neighborhoods, finding that four (50%) were operational, while four (50%) remained off.

Their findings are presented below.

LOCATION	NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE TESTED	2024 ON/OFF	2025 ON/OFF
Bloomfield Pool & Recreational Center	Bloomfield	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	OFF

¹ Andy Sheehan, “After Last Year’s Struggles Turning on Public Water Fountains, City Says Things Will Be Different This Summer,” cbsnews.com (CBS Pittsburgh, May 5, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/pittsburgh/news/pittsburgh-public-water-fountains-2025-what-is-happening/>.

² Sheehan

Anderson Playground	Schenley Park	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	ON
Osceola Playground	Bloomfield	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	OFF
Garland Park	East Liberty	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	OFF
Liberty Green Park	East Liberty	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	ON
Costa Court	Larimer	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	OFF	OFF
Mellon Park	East Liberty	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	ON
Moore Park	Brookline	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	ON
Brookline Memorial Park & Recreation Center	Brookline	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	OFF	OFF
Highland Park Playground	Highland Park	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	ON
Stanton Avenue Courts	Highland Park	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	ON
Wightman Park	Squirrel Hill	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	OFF	ON
Natoli Park	Morningside	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	ON
Heth's Park	Highland Park	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	ON
McKinley Park	Beltzhoover	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	ON
Woods Run at Central Avenue	Marshall Shadeland	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	OFF	OFF
Riverview Park Playground	Perry North	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	OFF	OFF
Jack Stack Park	Brighton Heights	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	OFF	OFF
Jack Stack Pool	Brighton Heights	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	ON	ON
McBride Park	Lincoln Place	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	OFF	ON
Leslie Park Playground	Lawrenceville	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	Not Examined	ON
Arenal Park Playground	Lawrenceville	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	Not Examined	ON
Ormsby Playground	Southside	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	Not Examined	OFF
Hershel Field	West End	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	Not Examined	ON
Pauline Park	Beechview	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	Not Examined	OFF
Vannucci Field	Beechview	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	Not Examined	OFF
Vannucci Spray Park	Beechview	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	Not Examined	OFF
Kennard Park	Hill District	Week of 6/16-6/20/2025	Not Examined	ON

