



KANAWHA-CHARLESTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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HEALTH OFFICIALS ADVISE RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY FLOODS TO DISINFECT THEIR WATER SUPPLIES

Because floodwaters carry disease-causing organisms that can lead to serious illness or even death, the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department recommends that you take precaution to have your water system disinfected prior to using the water for drinking, washing dishes, brushing teeth, washing and preparing food and making ice. To ensure that your water supply is safe, the following procedures must be carried out:

PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES All wells, springs, cisterns, pumps and pipes that have been exposed to flood water must be disinfected. This can be accomplished using common laundry bleach labeled to contain 5.14% available chlorine. A five-gallon batch of disinfecting solution can be prepared mixing one gallon of bleach with four gallons of water. To disinfect the water supply:

1. Remove all debris from the well, spring, cistern or reservoir. 2. Pour half (2 1/2 gallons) of the disinfecting solution into the supply.
2. Start the pump and open all taps until the water from each tap has a distinct chlorine odor, then close the taps.
3. Pour the remaining 2 gallons of the solution into the water supply and allow the solution to remain in the water for 12 to 24 hours. Do not use any water from the supply for at least 12 hours.
4. After the waiting period, pump the water supply to waste until the chlorine odor disappears, and it should then be safe for use. However, this disinfecting process is only temporary and only water in the supply at the time of treatment is disinfected. Fresh water entering the supply may also be contaminated, so to insure safety you should always have a slight taste of chlorine present in the water.

Your local health department sanitarian should collect and test samples before the water is used. However, tests can only be done on supplies constructed to properly protect the water. Improperly protected supplies can be unsafe, and immediate steps should be taken to abandon or reconstruct such supplies so they will be 'protected against further contamination. Your health department has information on how to protect your water supply.

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES If a "Boil water advisory" has been-issued on your water system, that means water should be heated to a rolling boil and boiled for five minutes before -it -is safe for drinking and other domestic uses. The taste may be improved by pouring the water back and forth from one clean container to another, by allowing -it to stand for a few hours, or by adding a pinch of salt to each quart of boiled water.

For more information about flood clean-up procedures, call the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department at 304-348-8050.

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