

Water System Emergency Procedures

It pays to be prepared before an emergency. Prior to an emergency, the water system should review its emergency response plan and update the plan where required. If possible, maintain elevated storage at full capacity to provide protection. Routinely start up generators and turn valves to verify proper functioning.

Monitor system pressure and chlorine residuals. If the system loses pressure or wells are submerged, issue a precautionary boil advisory. Precautionary boil advisories or water rationing notices should be issued by the media, posting and word of mouth. Notices should be posted at prominent locations such as city hall, the water office, post office and grocery stores. Ask users to take precautions to avoid cross-connections so when power is restored, cross-contamination potential is diminished. After the problem is corrected, the system should perform bacteriological line tests before lifting a precautionary boil advisory.



Measures to Take in the Event of a Water Outage

1. Ask the public to restrict water use and implement rationing. Non-essential businesses such as carwashes and laundries should be curtailed. Prohibit outside uses of water such as watering lawns and filling swimming pools. Recommend that major indoor uses such as clothes washing be postponed until service is restored.
2. Contact the local DEQ office or DEQ hotline at (800) 522-0206 to report the event.
3. The mayor or chairman of the board should contact the county emergency manager if bottled water, a water buffalo or a generator is needed. The system operator should ensure a safe chlorine residual in the tankers before distributing the water to citizens. Consider making bottled water available until water tankers are on-site.

The system may have to valve off portions of the distribution system to prevent contamination from entering the system through leaking joints or cracked pipes. To avoid further line damage, re-pressurize the system slowly to avoid water hammer. Bleed air from lines as they refill since trapped air can impede flows.

If power is lost, contact the power company and make arrangements to restore power as a primary customer. If equipment is damaged, make arrangements with local companies to purchase materials and supplies and to borrow/lease equipment needed to make repairs. Keep detailed records of expenditures in the event that a Presidential disaster declaration is made.

Join SoonerWARN

Join SoonerWARN prior to an emergency. Oklahoma's Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (SoonerWARN) is the formalized system of "utilities helping utilities" with mutual aid during emergency situations. The goal of SoonerWARN is to provide immediate relief for member utilities during times of emergencies.

To join SoonerWARN, visit www.soonerwarn.org or call (405) 672-8925.

For additional information on this subject please contact your local DEQ representative or the Water Quality Division of the Department of Environmental Quality at (405) 702-8100.