

Polluted Water

After a disaster there are often areas that contain polluted water. The nature of the pollution will depend on the types of facilities in the area and what the water has contacted. This may range from untreated wastewater from a sewage disposal system to chemical contaminants from an industrial facility. It is important for citizens to be aware that where potentially contaminated water is standing, personal contact should be avoided. This includes all streams, rivers, and waterways that could be contaminated after a disaster.

Citizens should take the following precautions:

- Avoid contact with potentially contaminated waters unless absolutely necessary. If contact does occur, shower or bathe as soon as possible, using antibacterial soap if available.
- If you are injured while in contact with polluted water, contact your physician regarding vaccinations that may be necessary to prevent infection.
- After the water has receded, the cleanup process may also create the risk of contact with contaminants. Take precautions to limit contact with these contaminants. Outside areas should be rinsed or washed using a garden hose.
- If an area is suspected of being contaminated with chemical or petroleum products, contact your local DEQ office for further cleanup information.

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

