

# HEALTH ADVICE ON WATER

What to do after a disaster happens

## WATER SUPPLY

In the aftermath of a disaster, the supply of drinking water, private water supplies, tanks, wells and bores may be contaminated or stopped all together.

Residents should monitor public announcements, or contact the local water supplier to determine if tap water is safe to use. Private water supplies should also be tested before using again.

## PREPARING FOR A DISASTER

In preparation for a disaster event, ensure you have a sufficient stock of bottled water. The World Health Organization recommends approximately 3L of water, per person, per day.

Conserve all treated drinking water and use it for drinking only.

## MAKING SURE WATER IS SAFE TO USE

Boiling will ensure that water is safe from most types of harmful bacteria, although it won't remove chemical contaminants.

How to boil water to make it safe.

- 1) Filter cloudy water through a clean cloth or allow it to settle and then pour off the clear water for boiling.
- 2) Boil the water to a rolling boil for at least one minute before drinking (or as directed under a boil water alert).
- 3) Leave it to cool and store in a clean, covered container.

**Note:** A boil water alert is issued by a government or health authority when the community's drinking water supply has been contaminated.

Use only bottled, boiled or treated water – in that order of preference – for drinking, cooking or preparing food, washing utensils and surfaces, brushing teeth, hand washing, making ice and bathing.

Advice on the effectiveness of alternative disinfection methods should be sought from suitably qualified professionals.

## IF YOUR WATER SUPPLY FAILS

If your water supply is cut off completely, save the water in your hot water system for drinking, cooking and kitchen use. Take precautions against scalding.

Water for flushing toilets can be obtained from a swimming pool, rainfall or other untreated supply.

Once the main water supply is back in operation, flush out all taps for 5 to 10 minutes to clear pipes of sediments.

## MORE INFORMATION

If a disaster threatens, refer to the Emergency Management Dashboard at [disaster.townsville.qld.gov.au](https://disaster.townsville.qld.gov.au).

More information on disaster management can be found on council's website at [townsville.qld.gov.au](https://townsville.qld.gov.au), or phone council on 13 48 10.