

HEALTH ADVICE ON WATER

What to do after a disaster happens

PLAN. PREPARE. ACT.



Water supply

Having access to adequate supply of safe drinking water during and immediately after a disaster is one of the most important parts of protecting your health.

Preparing for a disaster

In preparation for a disaster event, ensure you have a sufficient stock of bottled water in your emergency kit to last three days. The World Health Organization recommends approximately 4L of water per person, per day.

Actions following a disaster

In the aftermath of a disaster, the supply of drinking water, private water supplies, tanks, wells and bores may become contaminated or may not be available.

If drinking water supply is impacted, residents are encouraged to monitor Council's Emergency Management and Disaster Dashboard for updates on the water supply to confirm if the water supply is safe and suitable for consumption. Non-reticulated water supplies should also be tested before using again.

If your water supply is cut off completely, it is recommended that you save the water in your hot water system for drinking, cooking and kitchen use. Be sure to take precautions against scalding.

Making sure water is safe to use

If the community's drinking water supply has been contaminated, a government or health authority will issue directions on safe use.

Boiling water will ensure the water is safe from most types of harmful bacteria. Boiling water will not remove chemical contaminants, such as fuels.

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.

Use only bottled, boiled or treated water – in that order of preference – for:

- drinking
- cooking or preparing food
- making baby formula
- washing utensils and surfaces
- brushing teeth
- hand washing
- making ice
- bathing infants.

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

Once the main water supply is back in operation, follow any directions given by Council or relevant Health Authority on safe use.

Helpful information

When cleaning dirty dishes, they should be washed in hot soapy water, rinsed with hot water and then left to air dry.

Residents are not required to boil water for the purposes of toilet flushing, washing of clothes or showering.

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

More information

If a disaster threatens, refer to the Emergency Management and Disaster Dashboard at disaster.townsville.qld.gov.au.

More information on disaster management can be found on Council's website at townsville.qld.gov.au, or phone Council on 13 48 10.