Appendix H.
Emergency Communications Planning Template
Emergency Communications Planning Template
In Event of Major Disaster and System Disruption

July 2018
This Emergency Communications Planning Template (Template) may be added to a utility’s existing communications planning toolbox for use during significant emergency and/or system disruption. This Template is not a stand-alone or custom-crafted document for any specific utility, but one that may be referenced by all Water Supply Forum (WSF) members and sub-member agencies to aid in communicating water quality and supply information to various outside-agencies and the general public.

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Purpose

The purpose of this Emergency Communications Planning Template (Template) is to outline a structure and present recommendations toward a process for communicating the status of water quality to the public following a large-scale disaster, such as an earthquake.

This document concentrates on returning potability in the regional supply system, which is the critical first step for achieving potability in the individual water systems. However, the information is also applicable to both regional and local/small water systems as all agencies may experience similar challenges when recovering from a major event. A common guidance and agreed-upon key messages, such as included in this Template, will help to achieve more consistent communication with and especially, avoid conflicting messages to the public in the region. Keys to effective communication during a crisis are simple and consistent messages from credible sources in a timely manner (CDC 2014).

The goals of this Template are to:

1. Help subject matter experts - water quality leads for the water systems - be better prepared for communication needs during an emergency;
2. Provide guidance for developing utility-specific communications on water quality issues;
3. Develop, compile existing, and share key messages and communication templates between the regional water purveyors and their wholesale customers; and,
4. Help identify needed resources and coordination needs.

Assumptions

An area-wide disinfect$^1$ water advisory (BWA) or do-not-use-advisory will be issued following a significant disaster such as an earthquake or event that has caused a large-scale depressurization. This advisory would be put in place in coordination with the local and state public health officials and is likely impacting all the water systems in the area. This Template explains the communication process, includes example news releases and public notices, and compiles available guidance for responding to the public mainly on the concerns over microbial contamination. Only limited discussion and tools are included for do-not-use advisory caused by chemical contamination.

The plan / guidance for determining the potability of water is located in Appendix I: Determining Potability of Regional Water Supply. This guidance was developed to help utilities define and achieve potability in their regional water supply systems where traditional industry guidance does not exist or could not be followed. The downstream distribution systems and the other separate water systems are the responsibilities of the local purveyors. The purveyors will need to work with the local and state health officials to determine criteria needed in order to rescind the health advisory in their service area.

This Template is not a specific, detailed emergency response plan for any utility – it is only a guideline for you to create your specific plan of communications with the public and partners on water quality. This Template was developed by the Water Supply Forum (WSF) Resiliency Project team to improve the region’s water supply resiliency and emergency preparedness. The reason for this Template is to provide

$^1$This more general term is used instead of “boil water orders” to reflect that customers may not be able to use natural gas stoves to boil water during an emergency, either due to explosion hazards or interruption of the natural gas supply.
clear and consistent communication across the region in order to foster and maintain trust between the partners and the public.

How to Use this Document

Document Storage

It is recommended that this Template be stored both electronically as well as in hard-copy format (e.g., 3-ring binder). The reason for dual storage is that, during a major disaster, electronic copies may not be easily accessible. It may even be prudent to store the most recently-updated Template in multiple hard-copy locations and/or on portable flash drives to be kept with key operations staff and management at all times. Emergency responders are listed in Appendix B: Utility Emergency Responder Contacts (internal) and outside-agency contacts are listed in Appendix C: Outside-Agency Emergency Responder Contacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Electronic Storage Location:</th>
<th>Custodian:</th>
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Staff that have portable drives or hardcopies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Mobile Phone Number</th>
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Revising and Updating this Document
This plan is managed by the Custodian named above. After it is updated, the following should be done:

1. The date in the header block should be updated;
2. The revision block, below, should be completed by the person(s) performing the update; and,
3. The new version of this document should replace old versions (printed and electronic) on a fairly regular basis (after significant changes and/or every 6-8 months as routine changes are made).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Revision Details</th>
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Establishing Communications Team

Since each utility represents just one of the many water suppliers in the area, we need to work together with our partners, neighboring water systems, jurisdictions, and health officials, to achieve consistent and clear communication with the public. If possible, information should be released to the public from only one source: either from the local or regional incident command.

If your agency is taking the lead in communications with the public, you should only use trained media spokespeople to convey the messages to the media and follow your communications plan and protocols. If the communications are led by the over-arching regional incident command (IC), you will work with your liaison to the IC’s Public Information Officer (PIO) on message contents and delivery. Direct media communications should only be handled by the designated spokespeople or the PIO within the established IC. Any other staff should refer questions from the media to the PIO.

Document Available Incident Command and Communication Team Structure

Table 1 provides a template for documenting who is the lead Incident Commander, who will act as the lead PIO, and who will act in regional / support roles or as your liaison to the IC. Because every incident will cause different people to be available, this table should not be completed until the ICS is established, this communications plan is activated, and the appropriate available personnel are identified. Appendix B: Utility Emergency Responder Contacts can be used to list or chart your staff with their assigned NIMS roles to help navigate and identify the people to contact.

Table 1. Emergency Incident Command Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title - Role (examples)</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mobile Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incident Commander</td>
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<tr>
<td>IC Public Information Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Health Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content and Message Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Coordinator</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder/Partner Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Outreach Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Monitoring Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject Matter Experts</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Roles and Responsibilities

Table 2 describes expected responsibilities for staff. One person may fulfill more than one role in a smaller incident, while larger incidents and organizations may need different individuals for each role.

**Table 2. Responsibilities during emergency response (modified from New Jersey Dept. of Health 2013)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities/Tasks/Duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Public Information Officer        | - Activates the plan under the direction of the local Health Officer  
- Directs the work related to the release of information  
- Coordinates with state and local communication partners to ensure consistent messages  
- Provides updated information to the Health Officer, Incident Command and state responders following emergency communication protocols  
- Advises the Health Officer and chain of command regarding information to be released, based on the organization’s role in the response  
- Identifies and works as liaison with spokespeople  
- Reviews materials for release to media, public and partners  
- Obtains required clearance of materials for release  
- Ensures that human, technical and mechanical supply resources are available to provide information to the public  
- Ensures crisis communication protocol is followed |
| Content and Messages Coordinator  | - Develops and establishes mechanisms to receive information from the IC  
- Translates reports and notes into information appropriate for public and partner needs  
- Works with subject matter experts to create situation-specific fact sheets, Q&As and updates  
- Tests messages and materials for cultural and language requirements  
- Adapts messages based on input from other communication team members and analysis from media, public, and partner monitoring systems  
- Identifies additional content requirements and material development |
| Media Coordinator                 | - Assesses media needs and organizes mechanisms to fulfill those needs  
- Triage the response to media requests and inquiries  
- Ensures that media inquiries are addressed as appropriate  
- Supports spokespeople  
- Develops and maintains media contact lists and call logs  
- Produces and distributes media advisories and press releases  
- Produces and distributes other materials  
- Oversees media monitoring systems and reports, including media Web sites information reported and accuracy (e.g., analyzes trends, concerns and misinformation)  
- Serves as a liaison from your organization to the Joint Information Center (JIC)  
- Acts as a member of the field site team for media relations |
| Direct Public Outreach Coordinator| - Activates or participates in the telephone information line  
- Activates or participates in the public E-mail response system  
- Activates or participates in developing public service announcements (PSAs), flyers, notices and other information distributed to the public  
- Organizes and manages emergency response Web site and Web pages  
- Establishes and maintains links to other emergency response Web sites  
- Oversees public information monitoring systems and reports  
- Activates or participates in public and elected official briefings and community meetings |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities/Tasks/Duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifies special population needs related to communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Partner and Stakeholder Coordinator | - Establishes communication protocols based on prearranged agreements with identified partners and stakeholders  
- Arranges regular partner briefings and updates  
- Solicits feedback and responds to partner information requests and inquiries  
- Oversees partner/stakeholder monitoring systems and reports including partner/stakeholder Web sites to ensure the information presented is accurate  
- Helps organize and facilitate official meetings to provide information and receive input from partners or stakeholders  
- Responds to legislators, special interest group requests and inquiries |
| Media Monitoring Coordinator | - Monitors internal communications, including emails, text messages and memos.  
- Monitors external communications including television, newspapers, radio, blogs and social media  
- Provides feedback on qualities of communications                                                                                                         |

**Resources**

To implement this plan, resources such as safe office space, office and other equipment, and personnel are required. It should also be determined if possible additional resources are needed during the emergency. Internal procedures should be included in the appendices along with a complete list of utility needs inserted into *Appendix K: List of Resources needed to implement this plan*.

**Staff Training**

Staff should regularly practice the ability to find this Template and identify available operations, management, and communications staff members for hypothetical emergency response. Practice should include assigning leadership roles based on available staff, operations activities, establishment of lines-of-communication, and determining the safest and most effective response protocols.

Developing and practicing emergency response include actions such as:

- **Assuming roles and responsibilities**
  - Identify people or positions that have the authority to release information to the public  
  - Identify people or positions that are designated media spokespeople for your system  
  - List other trained media speakers (back-up people)
- **Conducting mock training with the above roles filled**
- **Finding and using this Template**
  - Identify subject matter experts  
  - Assign emergency response roles – especially as it related to communications functions.  
  - Draft messages to the public based on an example scenario
- **Training staff to be part of the customer service center and respond to questions from the public.**
Communication Process

The communication process is illustrated in Table 3. Frequent public communication should be expected throughout the emergency and utilities should be prepared to issue a health advisory, status of recovery and potability, end of the advisory, and end of the incident.

*Table 3. Communication to the public – process (adapted from EPA 2013)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Internal Verification and Clearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Take the steps to confirm the information and get approval for release to the public and partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Agency Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Contact DOH, wholesale partners, internal staff, PIOs</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Coordinate with Joint Information Center and Public Information Officer in Incident Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Confirm messages</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Decide on communications strategy and primary party responsible for the public outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Public Notification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Finalize public notice, key messages, other statements (websites, customer service center, media)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Confirm location and timing of the press conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Notify key public and elected officials and other response partners of the notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Public Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Release information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hold press conference and establish schedule for the next statement (note: this is a critical step)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Send follow up outreach materials to the media (like public notice, maps)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provide updated information to the customer service center</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Update website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Social media outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Email customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Contact critical users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Media Tracking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Track and monitor reports in traditional and social media outlets</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Track Internal utility communications (ensure correct information is being relayed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Provide response and rebuttal if necessary</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Obtain feedback on communication efforts</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Share the feedback with other partners</td>
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</table>

*Repeat #1-5 for all new information to be released during the incident*

| 6. End of Incident - Return Normal Operations and Communications |
| - May include final notification to the public, lifting all restrictions, and close the incident |
| - Obtain feedback on the communication efforts |
| - Evaluate the communications and share results with ICS staff |
| - Conduct survey to determine public perceptions and information needs regarding the incident |
| 7. Revise plan and save templates |
The steps 1-5 are repeated as long as there is new information to be released to the public. The final step, after the incident is over, is to evaluate the communication efforts and seek feedback from partners, incident response team, and your customers. That information should then be used to revise this plan and the templates.

**Internal Verification and Clearance**

A utility should understand processes and procedures needed to obtain, verify, and approve information released to the public. This may include being able to answer the following questions:

- Who is in charge of the release of information to the public?
  - What is your organization’s policies and protocol for information release?
  - Is clearance from a higher authority needed?
  - Who must review new information before released? Note that the CDC guidebook (CDC 2014) recommends 3 people for the clearance process: communications director, policy director, and subject matter expert.

- What are the staff responsibilities?

- How long will it take to release any new information?

- How will you track and log the information that is released?

**Agency Coordination**

Table 4 (with sections A and B) provides a structure for summarizing available and/or preferred methods of communication between the partners. Communicating with your partners and external agencies is critical for achieving consistent messages. In this exercise, utilities should describe the process, protocols, and responsibilities for ensuring this coordination takes place.

**Table 4. Communication with other agencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>A. External Agency Communication</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication needs:</strong> Public notifications (mandatory or not), recovery status and potability achieved, water quality results, flushing and testing plans, timeline for repairs, conservation needs, end of incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Washington State Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Seattle &amp; King County Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Snohomish Health District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods:</strong> Describe methods available, include priority order if a preference exists and a way to track that communication took place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Verbal</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Telephone/cell phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Email (Water Quality staff issue email notice of system status)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Handheld Radios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Staff exchange messages via radio or relay information to appropriate dispatcher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Describe protocol/frequencies or reference internal emergency response contact info
- Satellite phones (use approved protocols)

B. Wholesale Partners Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication needs:</th>
<th>Public notifications, recovery status, water quality results, flushing and testing plans, timeline for repairs, conservation requests, potability achieved, end of advisory, end of incident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To:</td>
<td>- Wholesale Customer Contact (or list central contact entity/entities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Or list here the central contact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methods: Describe methods available, include priority order if a preference exists and a way to track that communication took place.
- Verbal
- Telephone/cell phone (call tree)
- Email (Water Quality staff issue email to one person who then forwards to wholesalers)
- Handheld Radios
  - Staff exchange messages via radio or relay information to appropriate dispatcher
  - Describe protocol/frequencies or reference internal emergency response contact info
  - Satellite phones (use approved protocols)

One way to coordinate in a regional event is to form a Join Information Center (JIC). A JIC is a temporary organization established to get the representatives from different agencies together (physically or virtually) to ensure release of accurate, consistent, and timely information to the public. It is possible that the state or county health department would assume a leading role in the creation and management of a JIC, but you should know your role, contact to the JIC and your partners, and if possible develop agreements, protocols, or procedures ahead of time.

Public Notification and Outreach

Public notification and outreach needs to be done as comprehensively as possible using all media outlets available for you. It is important to let your customer know about the water quality, what they can do to protect themselves, and to inform them when the water meets the potable standards again. Depending on the situation, public notification may be required by the rules if a violation of a drinking water standard occurred or because water quality is unknown. Following a natural disaster, you would likely issue a health advisory due to the likelihood of contamination. You may also have incurred a treatment technique violation if inadequately treated water was led into the system. If notification is required (such as disinfect water due to treatment failure or confirmed E. coli contamination), mandatory health language must be included in it. You should consider including at least the mandatory health language even if the notification was not required by the rules.

A news release notifies the public about the issuance of the advisory and is often a shortened and simplified version of the actual public notice. If a press conference is held, you should prepare a spokesperson statement with developed key messages to help keep the message on-topic. It is also important to determine how frequently you will give updates and include timing for the next update in the release or statement. The following section titled “Notice Content” describes content requirements
in detail with examples included in Appendix F: News Release Templates and Appendix G: Public Notification Templates.

Below is a list of items to be considered and documented for each outreach type.

1. News release to the media - TV, Radio, Newspapers
   - Prepare news release template (see Appendix F: News Release Templates).
   - Be prepared for interviews (Appendix H: Fact sheets and other available guidance includes common questions with answers, example message map for key messages on disinfect water advisory and Appendix F: News Release Templates includes “77 most frequently asked questions by journalist in an emergency”).

2. Maintain a list of media contacts
   - Appendix E: News Media Contacts.
   - Maintain list of media-trained staff to help with interviews and finalizing messages.

3. Press Conference
   - Describe who will host and where it will take place. Potentially contact your partners or local/state public health to request assistance. Speakers should be adequately trained.
   - Maintain a list of people that are media-trained.
   - Prepare a statement (a template is included in Appendix F: News Release Templates).

4. Customer Service/Call Center
   - Describe customer service activation process, its location, and staffing.
   - Describe how information gets conveyed back and forth between the call center and the rest of the incident response team.
   - Designate a point of contact.
   - Develop process for tracking and logging calls/questions.
   - Develop key messages and Q&A sheets for anticipated common questions (Appendix H: Fact sheets and other available guidance).

5. Hotline with recorded messages
   - Procedure for activating and establishing a hotline. Include frequency of updates.
   - Procedure for clearing the message.
   - Develop a template message.
   - Consider power outages that may impact usability.

6. Website
   - Describe/include policy on web posting in Appendix J: Policies and Agreements.
   - Create a template website suiting your web-system and includes key resources and links
   - Develop process for getting the website or page up, promoted, and updated.
   - If you do not have a website, consider using other known and trusted websites for conveying your messages timely and accurately.

7. Social media
   - Describe policy on social media and include in Appendix J: Policies and Agreements.
   - Name the platforms to be used. Have presence there before emergencies happen (or use other organizations sites). Establish methods to monitor/follow mainstream media.
o Develop process for posting, monitoring, and tracking activity.
o Develop guidelines for audience interaction and addressing false information.
o Consider ways to receive customer feedback.
o Create list of hashtags or Twitter/Facebook accounts to follow and use.

8. Direct Call
o Limited critical customers (e.g., hospitals, industrial customers) may need a direct call, and should be included in Appendix D: Critical Customers Contacts.
o Develop a process for knowing when to activate this response and who will do it.
o Consider wholesale customer contacts, especially if they need to shut supplies.

9. Email
o Develop messages and procedures. Consider ways to confirm the message is received.
o Create a process of getting and maintaining the email addresses.
o Does not meet public notification rule requirements even with mandatory information.

10. Reverse 911/county alert system
o Determine availability, coverage areas, and how long it takes.
o Develop and document process (include in Appendix J: Policies and Agreements).
o Develop message contents within the limits of the service

11. Door-to-door notice
o This is very time consuming and expensive, but likely applicable a small area (e.g., houses served from a transmission main or a discreet/separate area).
o Appendix G: Public Notification Templates includes templates (make door hangers).

12. Sandwich boards or traffic boards
o Find out where these would be helpful and how to access them.
o Only a short note can be included.
o Helpful for flushing crews during recovery as they move around the system.

13. Loud speakers
o Police can go around and use their speakers to inform people in an impacted area.
o Message would need to be clear and concise to avoid panic.

Media tracking
It is important to monitor media outlets and evaluate if they are conveying the messages accurately. A leader (e.g., Media Coordinator), with an approved tracking process, needs to be established. Feedback or observations needs to be communicated internally and to external partners to help their efforts.

Notice Content
Each public notice needs to be customized. In general, notices should cover the following:

- Nature of contaminant / contamination / contamination event,
- What people can do to minimize the possible adverse impacts,
- Potability criteria, system status, and final remediation goals,
• Status of system integrity,
• Sampling and monitoring plans,
• Results of the ongoing sampling,
• Goal for returning system to normal operations (as soon as possible), and
• Where and how people can find more information.

A Disinfect Water or Do Not Use advisory would likely be issued in the event of an earthquake or similar disaster until water systems can confidently inspect and test their infrastructure. A Disinfect Water advisory would be warranted if there are any failures in primary treatment, elevated turbidity in finished water, lack of disinfection, or system depressurization. Do not use-advisory could result from possible or confirmed cross connections or other contamination with chemical/hazardous materials in the distribution system, complaints of off taste or color, chemical overfeed, or signs of vandalism. Disinfecting is very effective against all microbes but may do very little to resolve chemical contamination.

If the public notice is required due to violation of a primary drinking water regulation, the notice must include the following elements (Title 40 CFR 141.205 and WAC 246-290-72012):

1. A description of violation or situation, including contaminant(s) of concern and their level(s).
2. When the violation or situation occurred.
3. Any potential adverse health effects including the applicable standard language. Table 5 below includes the microbial risk-related health impact statements. Appendix G: Public Notification Templates has the complete list from the rule.
4. The population at risk, including subpopulations particularly vulnerable if exposed to the contaminant in their drinking water.
5. Whether alternative water supplies should be used.
6. What actions consumers should take, including when they should seek medical help, if known.
7. What the system is doing to correct the violation or situation.
8. When the water system expects to return to compliance or resolve the situation.
9. The name, business address, and phone number of the water system owner, operator, or designee of the public water system as a source of additional information concerning the notice.
10. A statement to encourage the notice recipient to distribute the public notice to other persons served, using the standard language (see below), where applicable.

It is required to provide notice in other languages if a non-English speaking group consists of 10% of the population served by a water system. Examples in multiple languages are available at EPA and DOH websites for copying. Translations of the mandatory drinking water warnings are included in the Appendix G: Public Notification Templates. Any of these language needs must be identified with
properly translated messages before an emergency, and more may need to be developed during an emergency.

**Mandatory Standard Language**

If there is a violation of a drinking water standard, the public notice must include the following:

1. Standard health effects language for MCL or MRDL violations, treatment technique violations, and violations of the condition of a variance or exemption are listed in the WAC 246-290-72012 and Appendix B of the Title 40 CFR 141.205 and in Appendix G: Public Notification Templates. For an earthquake response, the likely language would be related to the surface water treatment or fecal contamination. The mandatory language for these is included in Table 5.

*Table 5. Mandatory health language related to microbial contamination and acute surface water treatment failures (for complete list, see Appendix G: Public Notification Templates)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contaminant</th>
<th>Standard health effects language for public notification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Groundwater Systems that have fecal indicator positive sample at the source</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fecal indicators</td>
<td>Fecal indicators are microbes whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause short-term health effects, such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a special health risk for infants, young children, some of the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. <em>E. coli</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. enterococci</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. coliphage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Water Rule Treatment</td>
<td>Inadequately treated or inadequately protected water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms can cause symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, cramps, and associated headaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique violations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concerns with water quality in the distribution system</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>E. coli</em></td>
<td><em>E. coli</em> are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Human pathogens in these wastes can cause short-term effects, such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a greater health risk for infants, young children, the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlorine (above 4.0mg/L)</td>
<td>Some people who use water containing chlorine well in excess of the MRDL could experience irritating effects to their eyes and nose. Some people who drink water containing chlorine well in excess of the MRDL could experience stomach discomfort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Inadequate surface water treatment

| Turbidity (MCL / SWTR TT, IESWTR TT, LT1ESWTR TT) | Turbidity has no health effects. However, turbidity can interfere with disinfection and provide a medium for microbial growth. Turbidity may indicate the presence of disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea and associated headaches. |
| Giardia lamblia, Viruses, Legionella, Cryptosporidium, HPC (SWTR/IESWTR/LT1ESWTR) | Inadequately treated water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites which can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches. |

2. Standard language for monitoring and testing procedure violations may be needed if you cannot perform necessary sampling during an emergency and waiver was not received from DOH). This language includes the following: *We are required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis. Results of regular monitoring are an indicator of whether or not your drinking water meets health standards. During [compliance period], we “did not monitor or test” or “did not complete all monitoring or testing” for [contaminant(s)], and therefore cannot be sure of the quality of your drinking water during that time.*

3. Standard language to encourage the distribution of the public notice to all persons served: *Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.*

In an earthquake situation, you may or may not have incurred an actual violation, but as a precaution, you should include the mandatory language in the notices given to your customers. The example notices in the Appendix G: Public Notification Templates include all these statements.

News Release and Public Notice Templates

Template notices are included in Appendix G: Public Notification Templates. Mandatory language is included in italics and must be kept as is. The parts you need to specifically modify to suit the situation are in red font and inside “<” and “>” marks. If there are options, pick one that best applies.

If the public is still under high stress, the news releases and notices may need to be shortened, simplified, and the key messages repeated. The trained media spokespeople and the news media will do this making it even more important that the critical information is clear, concise, and included in three key messages.

Templates for Automated Broadcast Notification

The automated contact systems like reverse 911 or text alerts and the customer hotlines cannot handle the lengthy public notice. The purpose of these outlets is to notify people about the incident or situation and ask them go look for more information and take appropriate action. These messages must be simple and short. They do not fulfill the requirements of a regulatory public notification and therefore, cannot serve as the only notification method to the public.
Key water quality concerns to be relayed in these short messages are (CDC 2013):

- Whom the message is from
- What actions consumers should take
- Whether alternative water supplies are available
- Where consumers can obtain additional information (e.g., website, telephone number)

Examples from the CDC are as follows:

**Abbreviated Message Template—Disinfect Water Advisory**

The [name of water system] is asking customers to disinfect tap water or use bottled water. For more information, go to [www.watersystemwebsite.org] or call [###-###-####].

**Abbreviated Message Template—End of Disinfect Water Advisory**

[Name of water system] customers no longer need to disinfect tap water.
For more information, go to [www.watersystemwebsite.org] or call [###-###-####].

**Website**

If power and internet services are available, a website can be an effective way to communicate with different audiences once the audience has been informed about the site or a page. It can provide accurate and timely updates on the recovery process to anyone interested; from your customers to international media reporters. More people can access a website at any given time compared to a call center but not everyone will be willing or able to do that.

Work with web-designers/developers to create a template for a website or page and have a general understanding on the information that will be included on the site, how long it will take to get it posted, how you will coordinate to make sure the messages stay consistent with other public outreach methods, and how you will manage the website. If your agency does not have a website, you could ask if a state or local health agencies could be able to develop and maintain a site for this kind of a situation, or consider developing a separate, independent site for the emergency situation only.

The website should include (CDC 2013):

- All press releases, notifications, and other communication documents
- Links to your social media accounts
- Links to EPA/CDC/State or local health departments about how to make water safe
- Details outlining the affected areas including a map
• Background information about the incident (e.g. what happened, the day/time it occurred)
• What people/institutions (e.g., hospitals, restaurants) should/should not do with water
• What officials are doing to fix the situation
• Estimates of how long the advisory may continue
• Contact or call center information for questions or additional information

All social media and traditional media messages should include the website address to steer people there. These should use the same key messages and message maps as was used for news releases and public notifications. Websites should include maps, pictures, and links such as links to YouTube videos for chlorinating drinking water and flushing household plumbing after an incident.

Social media
Social media requires presence ahead of time and creation of messages that will fit the particular format of the platform. Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram appear as the popular platforms used today. Others include LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, Reddit, Vine, Tumblr and so on. Using common hashtags (#) for the event would help in getting the messages together from different parties. You could also develop a list of hashtags that you will use with your partners or you could promote or tag in Twitter and Facebook. You should also create a list of accounts that you would want to follow during an incident like this (for instance Red Cross Northwest or Cascadia, WSDOT, DOH, Washington Governor, or your own elected officials).

Since these media outlets will keep evolving, you should keep updating and developing messages as new platforms come available. During and after the event, you would need to track and respond to the messages.

These outlets can also provide a way to receive customer feedback. For instance, Facebook hosts “I am safe” application in which people can mark themselves safe after an emergency, traffic accident, etc. Through an app like this, people could tell you if they have (or do not have) water and consequently, help define the impacted area.

Call Center
You should be prepared to talk about safety of the water (and how to make it safe) to pets as well as to people. Training of staff is critical so that they understand the importance of conveying empathy and ways to communicate with people in high stress situations. Customers should receive consistent and accurate messages with timely information on the incident and any progress. Your call center staff will appreciate well-defined key messages, fact sheets from credible sources to share, and a comfortable place with food, water, and support. Appendix H: Fact sheets and other available guidance includes information that you can develop further to be the most useful in the incident response.

Tracking calls received at the call center can include more than just questions answered. Other things to track include call volume, number of callers, number of callers who talked to a person versus only listening to a recorded message, and caller demographics. Records should include topic/reason of the call and caller contact information (CDC 2013).
Additional Recommendations

- Use visual aids like maps and colors. Maps with color coding can be very helpful in a larger scale incident where one part of the city may be on an advisory while the other side is not. It may also be helpful to develop a color-coding for indicating how far/close to potability the area is especially if the incident continues for long time and people start losing interest in the news.
  - For instance, green/yellow/red for safe-to-drink/service-restored-but-disinfecting still urged/no-water-service or adding a color for disinfected and flushed but waiting for sample results.
  - A map could be released to the news media or maintained at your own website.
  - Counties often have public parcel map viewers available and might be willing and able to add a layer showing the status of water service.

- Consider requesting news media to run a ribbon on televised broadcasts urging people to disinfect their drinking water.

- Consider different ways to keep people engaged during the recovery.

- Document the efforts of staff and any help you have received from other utilities. Pictures on the work they are doing during the emergency or allowing the media to see and document the conditions of the system might be effective communication to the public about the situation.

- Learn about risk communications. Training would be necessary for all media spokespeople as well as anyone that will be responding to customer questions.
References


Other useful resources:

CDC-CERC resources: https://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/resources/templates-tools.asp

CDC- Social Media Toolkit: https://www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Tools/guidelines/


### Appendix A: Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICS</td>
<td>Incident Command System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Incident Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIC</td>
<td>Joint Information Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIO</td>
<td>Public Information Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOH</td>
<td>Washington State Department of Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Utility Emergency Responder Contacts (internal)

Organizational chart
- Identify NIMS designations and subject matter experts

List of trained media spokespeople
- You could also describe the positions and required minimum training
Appendix C: Outside-Agency Emergency Responder Contacts

**Emergency Responders**

- **FBI Hotline** (Seattle Office)
  1-206-622-0460

- **State Emergency Management Duty Officer**
  1-800-258-5990

- **National Response Center**
  1-800-424-8802

- **Department of Ecology Spill Response**
  1-360-407-6300

- **EPA Region 10 Duty Officer**
  1-206-553-1264

- **National Guard Joint Operations Center**
  1-253-512-8773

- **Dept. of Homeland Security National Operations Center**
  1-202-282-9685

**County and State Health Departments**

- **Office of Drinking Water Hotline**
  1-877-481-4901

**Wholesale customer contacts (by treatment plant and transmission system)**
Appendix D: Critical Customers Contacts
Appendix E: News Media Contacts
Appendix F: News Release Templates

The table below lists the available templates and their file names. All the templates are saved at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>File Name or available at</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Washington State Department of Health - Template News Release for Disinfect Water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Disinfect Water News Release modified for an earthquake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Recovery Status Update – News Release</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rescind Notice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Potability achieved-notice to Wholesale Customers only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>CDC - Template for Tier 1 News Release that meets the Public Notification Rule requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Washington State Department of Health - Template News Release for Chemical-Related Water Quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Basics Elements of a Spokesperson Statement (CDC 2013)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>77 Most Frequently Asked Questions by Journalists in an Emergency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. DOH Template for News Release (publication #331-260)

For Immediate Release: <DATE>

Contact: Water purveyor/system contact name and telephone number

<Water System> announces disinfect water advisory for all customers in <area>

CITY NAME – The <SYSTEM NAME> is advising all water customers to disinfect their drinking water after recent samples showed the presence of E. coli. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has been notified and <SYSTEM NAME> is working closely with the Office of Drinking Water to find the source of contamination and fix the problem, which may include disinfecting the system. The disinfect water advisory will remain in effect until further notice.

(Sample quote) “We are doing all we can to eliminate the bacteria from the water system. Safe and reliable drinking water is critical to good health and responding to this kind of emergency is our highest priority,” said <System spokesperson>.

<NUMBER or NO> illnesses related to the community’s drinking water have been reported. To correct the problem <WHAT IS BEING DONE> (e.g. Chlorine was applied to the entire system on <DATE>.)

The disinfect water advisory includes several precautionary steps for customers. These include using purchased bottled water or disinfected water for drinking, brushing teeth, dishwashing, preparing food, and making ice. If boiling water to disinfect it, water should come to a rolling boil for one minute, then cool to an appropriate temperature before using.

The advisory will remain in effect until <SYSTEM NAME> and DOH are confident the water is safe. When satisfactory results are reported, customers will be notified that the advisory has been lifted.

If you have questions, please call us at <TELEPHONE NUMBER>. 
2. Disinfect Water Advisory – modified from DOH example to an earthquake situation

For Immediate Release: <DATE>

Contact: <Water purveyor/system contact name and telephone number>

<Water System> announces disinfect water advisory for all customers in <area>

CITY NAME – The <SYSTEM NAME> is advising customers to disinfect their drinking water. The earthquake has caused damage to our water supply system and we cannot guarantee the safety of the supply.

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has been notified. <SYSTEM NAME> is working closely with the first responders to assess the situation.

The disinfect water advisory includes several precautionary steps for customers. These include using purchased bottled water or disinfected water for drinking, brushing teeth, dishwashing, preparing food, and making ice. If boiling water to disinfect it, water should come to a rolling boil for one minute, then cool to an appropriate temperature before using. You can also use unscented household bleach to make water safe for consumption. Use 8 drops of bleach per one gallon of water and let it sit for 30 minutes.

This advisory will remain in effect until further notice. The following resources are available for you to get more information and updates of the situation:

- our website at
- Follow us on twitter @
- Call our customer hotline that will be updated as new information becomes available 1-888-
- Continue following the news media for updates. (include timeline for the next news release if available)

###
News Release

For Immediate Release: <DATE>

Contact: <Water purveyor/system contact name and telephone number>

<Water System name and transmission line #> Notice on Potable Water Status

CITY NAME – An update on the recovery of the regional water supply system. We have completed <inspections, repairs, disinfection, flushing, and water quality tests >. We are making good progress and expect to achieve potability status <soon/XX days>.

The inspection of our system following the <earthquake or event description> indicated <description of damage/source of contamination>. To date, we have (tailor to situation):

- Repaired the treatment plant and are producing good quality water at full capacity/reduced capacity
- Repaired the transmission main/repaired our main transmission main leading to XXX
- Cleaned and inspected the regions water reservoir
- Increased the chlorine dose
- Completed preliminary testing around the distribution system>

We continue to move fresh water through the system. Once we have stable chlorine residuals and confirmation that fresh water has reached your neighborhood, we will take further samples to ensure the water is free of potentially harmful pathogens.

We urge our customers to continue using purchased bottled water or disinfected water for drinking, brushing teeth, dishwashing, preparing food, and making ice. Because we are losing lot of water through the leaks, we ask our customers to <restrict their water use to essential needs only/limit unnecessary use of water>.

The next status report will be send on <TIME AND DATE>

###
4. Disinfect Water Advisory Rescinded

For Immediate Release: <DATE>

Contact: <Water purveyor/system contact name and telephone number>

<City System> disinfect water advisory is rescinded

CITY NAME – Customers of <System NAME/Definition of Area/Map> no longer need to disinfect their drinking water. Our treatment plant is producing good quality water and the recent samples in the distribution system show normal water quality conditions and the absence of E. coli bacteria.

“Working with the <Washington State Department of Health/neighboring utility by name/incident response team> over the last <Number of> days, we have completed inspections, repairs, water quality tests, disinfection, and flushing to remove any contamination,” stated <Name of water system manager>. “We’re pleased to be able to lift the disinfect water advisory in this area.”

The inspection of the water system following the earthquake indicated <description of damage/source of contamination, if known, and what will be done to maintain good water quality such as maintaining higher than usual chlorine residual as a safety measure>.

You should flush all the fixtures including drinking water taps, fountains, ice machines, soda machines, and other equipment for <five> minutes or until there is a change in water temperature and the water appears clear. Start from the closest faucet to your water meter and once that runs clear and water is colder to touch, turn it off and move to the next faucet working your way to the other end of the plumbing in your house. You should not consume any ice made during the advisory.

<Immunocompromised people/elderly/infants may want to consult their doctors or as a precaution, continue to disinfect water until the whole system has been returned to normal.>

The <System name> encourages customers with questions to call <Telephone number> or visit our website at <Website> for a map of impacted customers and further information about the incident.

###
5. Restoration of Potable Water – Notice to wholesale customers

For Immediate Release: <DATE>

Contact: <Water purveyor/system contact name and telephone number>

<Water System name and transmission line #> Potable Water Status Restored

CITY NAME – The potability of the water in the transmission main from <PLANT> to <SITE/MILEPOST> has been restored. We have completed inspections, repairs, water quality tests, disinfection, and flushing to ensure the water meets the potability criteria.

The inspection of this transmission line following the <earthquake or event description> indicated <DESCRIPTION OF damage/source of contamination, if known, and what will be done to maintain good water quality, timeline for those repairs>. We are producing water at full capacity/reduced capacity and request you to conserve as much as possible/use water only for essential functions and have increased our chlorine dose.

We are posting a map of the recovered area on our website at <WEBSITE>. If you have questions, please call our <Wholesale customer service line> at <NUMBER>

###
6. CDC-example News Release Template that meets the Public Notification Rule requirements (CDC 2013)

**PURPOSE:** Use when a corresponding Tier 1 Public Notice disinfect water advisory is required and issued.

**DIRECTIONS:** Replace information in brackets with specific water system and advisory information. Adapt it as needed.

[Date]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [Name, Title, Phone, E-mail]

[Water System] issues a disinfect water advisory for all customers in [location]

[Water System] advises all customers to disinfect their drinking water. The disinfect water advisory is in effect until further notice.

A common method of disinfection is boiling. Customers should:

- Fill a pot with water.
- Heat the water until bubbles come quickly from the bottom of the pot to the top.
- Keep heating the water for one more minute.
- Turn off the heat source and let the water cool.
- Pour water into a clean, sanitized container with a cover for storage.

Use bottled water or disinfected water for:

- Drinking
- Brushing teeth
- Washing fruits and vegetables
- Preparing food and baby formula
- Making ice
- Giving to pets

The advisory is in effect until [Water System] and [other agencies] are confident there is no longer a public health concern. We will provide the next update at [date or timeframe]. Customers will be notified immediately when the advisory is lifted.

Tests results from [date] showed [contaminant] at [levels/amount]. The [Primacy Agency/Health Department] is working closely with [Water System] to find the contamination source and fix the problem. [Optional—including a quote from system spokesperson]

To correct the problem, we are [what is being done (e.g., chlorine was applied to the entire system)].

[Give dates or time estimate for duration of the advisory, if possible]. [Number or No] illnesses related to the community’s drinking water are reported.
If you are concerned about your health or your family, call your healthcare provider or the [local health department].

[Required EPA Health Effects Language for specific contaminant or violation. (Fecal coliforms and E. coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause short-term effects, such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a special health risk to infants, young children, some of the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems.)]

These symptoms are caused by many illnesses other than drinking water. [People at increased risk should seek advice about drinking water from their healthcare provider.]

[If applicable: (Water System or City) customers may pick up (alternative water supply, bottled water) at (location and time).]

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses).

For more information, go to [website] or call [phone]. Mail inquiries should be sent to [name], [Water System], [address]. [If applicable, include health department contact.]

Optional—General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

###
News Release

For Immediate Release: <DATE>
Contact: <Water purveyor/system contact name and telephone number>

Water System contaminated; customers should not drink the water

CITY NAME – <System Name> is advising customers not to drink their tap water because high levels of <chemical found> have been detected. Consuming even small amounts of this chemical may cause <SYMPTOMS, ILLNESS, DAMAGE> in some individuals.

The Washington State Department of Health has been notified, and <SYSTEM NAME> is working closely with the agency’s Office of Drinking Water to determine the cause of the problem and to correct it. Customers should not drink the water, or use it for cooking <OR BATHING?> until further notice.

“We are doing all we can to determine the extent of the problem and to find out what options are available to correct it,” said <SYSTEM SPOKESPERSON QUOTE> “Safe drinking water is critical to the health of our consumers and responding to this situation is our highest priority.”

There have been <NUMBER, OR NO> illnesses reported that might be related to the drinking water. This <CHEMICAL> is known to cause <ILLNESS> in certain susceptible individuals at levels much lower than the levels observed in this situation. It is not known what the impact might be at the high levels observed, but until more is known, consumers are being advised to not drink the water. To correct the problem, the <WATER SYSTEM NAME> is <WHAT IS BEING DONE>.

Consumers should use bottled water for drinking, cooking, teeth brushing, ice making, etc. until notified the problem has been corrected. Bathing or showering is <OKAY, OR NOT OKAY>. Customers should not disinfect the water, or otherwise try to treat it for drinking because this could make the water more hazardous.

This advisory will remain in effect until both the <SYSTEM NAME> and the Department of Health are confident there is no threat of illness to consumers. Customers will be notified when this advisory ends.

Customers who have questions or concerns should contact <PERSON’S NAME OR WATER SYSTEM > at <PHONE NUMBER>.

###
8. Basic Elements of a Spokesperson Statement (CDC 2013)

PURPOSE

Spokesperson statements are based on the messages developed using the Message Mapping Template or the Single Overriding Communication Objective (SOCO) Worksheet. Developing statements with these outlines can help to keep communication consistent.

DIRECTIONS

Review your messages and essential information for the advisory. Follow the outline provided and adapt to the specific advisory. Work with other organizations that will provide spokespeople to develop their statements. Use this outline to develop a statement for press conferences, briefings, or other public communications. Adapt and update the messages based on questions and feedback received during use.

Fill in information in the brackets.

........................................................................................................................................................................

.....

My name is [name], and I am the [position title] of [organization]. [Describe role].

This is an evolving situation, and I want to provide as much information as possible. As of now, I can confirm:

- At approximately [time], a [brief description of reason for drinking water advisory, are affected].
- At this point,
  - We know that [a main broke, positive coliform tests, there are no associated illnesses, etc.].
  - The areas impacted are: [give a clear delineation of boundaries of impacted area].
  - We do not know [number of illnesses, specific contaminant, etc.].
- We have a [system, plan, procedure] in place for this type of situation. [Describe actions].
- [Primacy agency, health department, etc.] is/are assisting by [actions].
- The situation is [under, not yet under] control, and we are working with [local, state, federal] authorities to [actions].
- We are asking the public to [actions and advice: disinfect water, throw out ice, location of alternative water].
- This advisory will continue until further notice [if possible, give an estimate of how long based on field staff feedback].
- We will continue to gather information and release it to you as soon as possible. I will be back to you [specific date, time] with an update.
- We appreciate everyone’s patience as we work to correct [situation].
### 9. 77 Most Frequently Asked Questions by Journalists in an Emergency (Hyer and Cavello, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is your name and title?</td>
<td>41. When were you notified that something had happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do you spell and pronounce your name?</td>
<td>42. Did you and other organizations disclose information promptly? Have you and other organizations been transparent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are your job responsibilities?</td>
<td>43. Who is conducting the investigation? Will the outcome be reported to the public?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Can you tell us what happened? Were you there? How do you know what you are telling us?</td>
<td>44. What are you going to do after the investigation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When did it happen?</td>
<td>45. What have you found out so far?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Where did it happen?</td>
<td>46. Why was more not done to prevent this from happening?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Who was harmed?</td>
<td>47. What is your personal opinion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How many people were harmed?</td>
<td>48. What are you telling your own family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Are those that were harmed getting help?</td>
<td>49. Are all those involved in agreement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How are those who were harmed getting help?</td>
<td>50. Are people over-reacting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Is the situation under control?</td>
<td>51. Which laws are applicable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Is there any immediate danger?</td>
<td>52. Has anyone broken the law?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. What is being done in response to what happened?</td>
<td>53. How certain are you about whether laws have been broken?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Who is in charge?</td>
<td>54. Has anyone made mistakes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. What can we expect next?</td>
<td>55. How certain are you that mistakes have not been made?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. What effects will this have on the people involved?</td>
<td>56. Have you told us everything you know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. What are you advising people to do? What can people do to protect themselves and their families — now and in the future — from harm?</td>
<td>57. What are you not telling us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. How long will it be before the situation returns to normal?</td>
<td>58. What effects will this have on the people involved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. What help has been requested or offered from others?</td>
<td>59. What precautionary measures were taken?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. What responses have you received?</td>
<td>60. Do you accept responsibility for what happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Can you be specific about the types of harm that occurred?</td>
<td>61. Has this ever happened before?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. What are the names, ages and hometowns of those that were harmed?</td>
<td>62. Can this happen elsewhere?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. How much damage occurred?</td>
<td>63. What is the worst-case scenario?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. What other damage may have occurred?</td>
<td>64. What lessons were learned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. How certain are you about the damage?</td>
<td>65. Were those lessons implemented? Are they being implemented now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. How much damage do you expect?</td>
<td>66. What can be done now to prevent this from happening again? What steps need to be taken to avoid a similar event?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. What are you doing now?</td>
<td>67. What would you like to say to those who have been harmed and to their families?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Who else is involved in the response?</td>
<td>68. Is there any continuing danger?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Why did this happen?</td>
<td>69. Are people out of danger? Are people safe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Why did this happen?</td>
<td>70. Will there be inconvenience to employees or to the public? What can people do to help?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. What was the cause?</td>
<td>71. How much will all this cost?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Did you have any forewarning that this might happen?</td>
<td>72. Are you able and willing to pay the costs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Why wasn’t this prevented from happening? Could this have been avoided?</td>
<td>73. Who else will pay the costs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. How could this have been avoided?</td>
<td>74. When will we find out more?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. What else can go wrong?</td>
<td>75. What steps need to be taken to avoid a similar event? Have these steps already been taken? If not, why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. If you are not sure of the cause, what is your best guess?</td>
<td>76. Why should we trust you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Who caused this to happen?</td>
<td>77. What does this all mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Who is to blame?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: Public Notification Templates

Index:

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<th>Name</th>
<th>File Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Washington State Department of Health Template for Public Notification – E. coli MCL Violation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Washington State Department of Health Template for Public Notification – surface water treatment issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Standard Health Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Translated Sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 This more general term is used instead of “boil water orders” to reflect that customers may not be able to use natural gas stoves to boil water during an emergency, either due to explosion hazards or interruption of the natural gas supply.
1. Drinking Water Warning (DOH) – E. coli

**DRINKING WATER WARNING**

*E. coli* MCL Violation

The _________________ Water System, ID ______, located in ________ County is contaminated with *E. coli* bacteria.

*E. coli* bacteria were detected in the water supply on _________________. These bacteria can make you sick and are a particular concern for people with compromised immune systems. Disinfected or purchased bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, and food preparation until further notice. Disinfecting kills bacteria and other organisms in the water.

**What should you do?**

**DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT DISINFECTING IT FIRST.** A common method of disinfection is boiling. Bring all water to a rolling boil, for 1 minute, and let it cool before using. Boiling kills bacteria and other organisms in the water.

*E. coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Human pathogens in these wastes can cause short-term effects, such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a greater health risk for infants, young children, the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems.*

The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice. People at increased risk should seek advice about drinking water from their health care provider.

**What happened? What is the suspected or known source of contamination?**

The following is being done to correct the problem:

We will consult with the State Department of Health about this incident. We will provide you notification when you no longer need to disinfect the water. We anticipate resolving the problem by ____________.

For more information please contact:

_________________________________________________________
(owner/operator)                    (phone #)         (address)           (email)

*Please share this notice with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.*

This notice is sent to you by ________________________________ Water System on ____/____/_____.

_________________________________________________________
2. Drinking Water Warning (DOH) – Surface Water Treatment issues

**DRINKING WATER WARNING**

**<System> has high turbidity levels**

____________________ Water System, ID _____, located in _______ County

We routinely monitor your water for turbidity (cloudiness). This tells us whether we are effectively filtering the water supply. A water sample taken [DATE] showed turbidity levels of [NUMBER] turbidity units. This is above the standard of [choose appropriate level 1 NTU or 5 NTU] turbidity units. Because of these high levels there is an increased chance that the water may contain disease-causing organisms.

**What should you do?**

**DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT DISINFECTING IT FIRST.** A common method of disinfection is boiling. Bring all water to a rolling boil, for 1 minute, and let it cool before using. Disinfected or purchased bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, and food preparation until further notice. Disinfecting kills bacteria and other organisms in the water.

_Turbidity has no health effects. However, turbidity can interfere with disinfection and provide a medium for microbial growth. Turbidity may indicate the presence of disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea and associated headaches. People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly may be at increased risk. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers._

The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice.

**What happened? What is being done?** [Describe reason for the high turbidity, corrective action, and when the system expects to return to compliance.]

We will inform you when turbidity returns to appropriate levels and when you no longer need to disinfect your water. For more information please contact:

______________________________ (owner/operator)     (phone #)     (address)     (email)

General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from the EPA Safe Drinking Water hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

_Please share this notice with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail._
This notice is sent to you by ________________________________ Water System on ____/____/____

DRINKING WATER WARNING

<System> has Inadequate Disinfection/has Experienced a Significant Treatment Failure/has Experienced a Significant Contamination of Our Water Source

______________________ Water System, ID ______, located in ________ County

Our water system uses filtered surface water. We normally disinfect the water to kill disease-causing organisms that may be present in the water. On <DATE> it was determined that there was no or inadequate disinfection of the water. Because of this, there is an increased chance that the water may contain disease-causing organisms.

OR

Our treatment process normally includes effective filtration and disinfection. Our <treatment process or monitoring equipment> has failed, creating uncertainty about the quality of our drinking water. Because of this facility failure, there is an increased chance that the water may contain disease-causing organisms.

OR

Our treatment process normally includes <effective filtration and disinfection>. We are currently experiencing significant contamination of our source, creating uncertainty about the ability of our treatment facilities to adequately treat our drinking water. Because of this contamination, there is an increased chance that the water may contain disease-causing organisms.

OR (monitoring)

We are required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis. Results of regular monitoring are an indicator of whether or not your drinking water meets health standards. During <compliance period>, we <did not monitor or test/did not complete all monitoring or testing> for <contaminant(s)>, and therefore cannot be sure of the quality of your drinking water during that time.

What should you do?

DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT DISINFECTING IT FIRST. A common method of disinfection is boiling. Bring all water to a rolling boil, for 1 minute, and let it cool before using. Disinfected or purchased bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, and food preparation until further notice. Disinfecting kills bacteria and other organisms in the water.

Inadequately treated water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites which can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches. People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly may be at increased risk. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers.
The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water, but also by other factors. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice.

What happened? What is being done? [Describe reason for the inadequate disinfection or circumstances surrounding the failure or contamination event, corrective actions being taken, and when the system expects to return to compliance.]

We will inform you when <adequate disinfection is being provided/facilities are properly operating/adequate treatment> and when you no longer need to disinfect your water.

For more information please contact:

______________________________________________________________
( owner/operator ) (phone #) (address) (email)

General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from the EPA Safe Drinking Water hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

Please share this notice with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is sent to you by ________________________________ Water System on ____/____/_____

#
3. Mandatory Health Effects Language of regulated contaminants

4. Translated Drinking Water Warnings DOH PUB. # 331-246 July 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>This report contains important information about your drinking water. Have someone translate it for you, or speak with someone who understands it.</th>
<th>Disinfect your water before using.</th>
<th>Don’t drink the water.</th>
<th>Children under 12 months old should not drink the water. Don’t use the water to make formula.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amharic</td>
<td>ከም ዜና እወንድን ይታጠቅ ይሆነ መዝገቡን ይታወቀ መወገድ ከም ዜና ይታጠቅ ይሆነ መዝገቡን ይታወቀ መወገድ</td>
<td>መጋቢት ከፋወንድን ይታወቀ መወገድ ከም ዜና ይታጠቅ ይሆነ መዝገቡን ይታወቀ መወገድ</td>
<td>መጋቢት ከፋወንድን ይጠቅ ይሆነ መወገድ</td>
<td>መጋቢት ከፋወንድን ይታጠቅ ይሆነ መዝገቡን ይታወቀ መወገድ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>هذا التقرير يحتوي على معلومات مهمة عن ماء الشرب الذي تستخدمه. يطلب من شخص ما أن يترجمه لك أو يستطيع فهمه.</td>
<td>إخلي الماء قبل استعماله.</td>
<td>لا تشرب الماء.</td>
<td>يجب أن لا يشرب الأطفال الذين أعمرهم أقل من 12 سنة هذا الماء. لا تستخدم هذا الماء لتحضير المثلجة (حليب الأطفال).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Simplified</td>
<td>此报告包含有关您的饮用水的重要信息。请人帮您翻译出来，或请看懂此报告的人将内容说给您听。</td>
<td>将水煮开后才使用。</td>
<td>不要喝这些水。</td>
<td>不满 12 个月大的小孩不应该喝这些水。不要用这些水做配方。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Traditional</td>
<td>此報告包含有關您的飲用水的重要資訊。請人幫您翻譯出來，或請能看懂此報告的人將內容說給您聽。</td>
<td>將水煮開後才使用。</td>
<td>切勿喝這些水。</td>
<td>不滿 12 個月大的小孩不應該喝這們水。切勿用這些水做配方。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This more general term is used instead of “boil water orders” to reflect that customers may not be able to use natural gas stoves to boil water during an emergency, either due to explosion hazards or interruption of the natural gas supply.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farsi</td>
<td>این گزارش شامل اطلاعات مهمی در مورد اب شنیدنی شما می‌باشد. از شخصی بجوهید که به‌شکل تجریه کنند و یا با شخصی که این موضوع را می‌فهمند صحبت بکنید. قبل از استفاده اب شنیدنی را به جوش بپایند. اب را نخورید.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Αυτή η αναφορά περιλαμβάνει σημαντικές πληροφορίες σχετικά με το πόσιμο νερό σας. Ζητήστε από κάποιον να σας τη μεταφράσει, ή μιλήστε με κάποιον που την καταλαβαίνει. Βράζετε το νερό πριν το χρησιμοποιήσετε. Μην πίνετε το νερό.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>זו ה突如 בפרא על משי总投资 tong כרים לשתות. כך מכניסיםירות אנח ניסים ואחרים, או רקון על מישור צמריבוף לבין תחתיוון._FALSE ש לותר את הים. גיא לשתות את הים.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>यह रिपोर्ट में आपके पीने वाले पानी के बारे में जरूरी जानकारी है। किसी से जिसका अनुशासन करना आता है उस से बात करें।. पानी इस्तेमाल करने से पहले उचाल लैं. पानी न पीएं।</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

كوقدان زیب ۱۲ ماهه نیایستی اب را بخورید. اب را برای درست کردن غذا بجه (فومول) استفاده نکنید.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>このレポートには飲料水に関する重要な情報が記載されています。この英文を訳してもらうか、またはどうなのか英語が分かる方にたずねてください。水は使用する前に沸かしてください。水を飲まないでください。12か月未満のお子様には水を飲ませないでください。水を使って乳児用ミルクを作らないでください。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>이 보고서에는 음료수에 대한 중요한 내용이 실려있습니다. 그러므로 이 보고서를 이해할 수 있는 사람이해 번역해 달라고 부탁하시기 바랍니다. 사용하기 전에 물을 끓여십시오. 물을 마시지 마십시오.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td>ណາມណອງລາວສານເໜຶ່ງເຊີຍກັບພັນພັກແກ້ກວ່າກົງງານ. ແຕ່ງຖ້ອມໄປພັນພັກແກ້ກວ່າກົງງານ, ແຕ່ ບັກຄືນທີ່ ບໍ່ແກ້ຄວາມສູງຂະດ້ານ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>ਹਿਮ ਸੀਪਟੇਂਡ ਹਿਂਦ ਗੁੱਡ ਵਾਲੇ ਬਟਦੀ ਲੱਗੇ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਨਾਲ। ਕਿਸੇ ਵੇਲੇ, ਹਿਮ ਦੀ ਮਰਮਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰਣ ਦੀ ਹਿਮ ਚਾ ਅਨਾਧਾਰਕ ਵਰਤਣ ਲਈ ਸੀ ਹਿਮ ਸੁਸਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>В этом сообщении содержится важная информация о воде, которую вы пьете. Попросите кого-нибудь перевести для вас это сообщение или поговорите с человеком, который понимает его содержание.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>O le lipoti lenei o lo’o iai ni mea e sili ona taulua e uiga i le vai o lo’o e taumafaina nei. Su’e se tagata e fa’ali’i lina mo oe, po’o lou talatalanao i seisi i aia sona malamalamaga i lenei mataupu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>Warbixintan waxay wadataa macluumaad muhim ah ee la xiriira biyaha aad cabtid. Cid ha kuu tarjunto ama la hadl cid fahmsaya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Este informe contiene información importante acerca de su agua potable. Haga que alguien lo traduzca para usted, o hable con alguien que lo entienda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>รายงานนี้มีข้อมูลสำคัญเกี่ยวกับน้ำที่รับประทานของคุณ มักจะมีตัวชี้วัดที่ปลอดภัยในน้ำ เป็นข้อมูลที่จำเป็นที่จะทำให้คุณทราบ หรือปรึกษาผู้เชี่ยวชาญเกี่ยวกับน้ำนี้</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ukrainian</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Ukrainian</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Це повідомлення містить важливу інформацію про воду, яку ви п'єте. Попросіть кого-небудь перекласти вам це повідомлення або поговоріть з людиною, яка розуміє його зміст.</td>
<td>יחה'ят'י воду до користування.</td>
<td>Не пийте воду.</td>
<td>Діти у віці до 12 місяців в не повинні пити воду. Не користуйтесь водою для приготування адаптованої дитячої суміші (&quot;формули&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tài liệu này có tin tức quan trọng về nước uống của quý vị. Hãy nhờ người dịch cho quý vị, hoặc hỏi người nào hiểu tài liệu này.</td>
<td>ENCY sôi nước trước khi dùng.</td>
<td>ENCY uống nước này.</td>
<td>Trẻ em dưới 12 tháng không nên uống nước này. Đừng dùng nước này để pha sữa formula.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The water glass and faucet may be useful in a posted notice that would be seen by many non-English speaking people to illustrate that they should not drink the water.
Appendix H: Fact sheets and Other Available Guidance

Index

<table>
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<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>File Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Treating Drinking Water for Emergency Use, DOH publication #331-115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Quick Reference Facts on Disinfect Water (CDC)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Message mapping template (CDC)</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>WHO factsheet on how effective boiling is</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Information on how to flush the lines of your home</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(New Jersey American Water example)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Example conservation messages (from the Committee members)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- It is often the small distribution lines that break in an earthquake – you could add talking points about why system is not fully recovered yet.
- Conservation messages:
  “There are still many leaks in the smaller distribution mains and we are losing a lot of water. We request that you use water for essential uses only at this time / avoid using water for non-essential purposes, such as lawn watering or car washing.”

¹This more general term is used instead of “boil water orders” to reflect that customers may not be able to use natural gas stoves to boil water during an emergency, either due to explosion hazards or interruption of the natural gas supply.
1. Treating Drinking Water for Emergency Use

DOH Publication #331-115 is a factsheet that explains how people can boil or disinfect their water. Available at: https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/331-115.pdf

2. Quick Reference Facts – Example for Disinfect Water Advisory (CDC 2013)

**PURPOSE:**

This is an example of an easy-to-use, quick reference tool that can be shared with customers during a water advisory.

**DIRECTIONS:**

Use this information in fact sheets and on websites; adapt as necessary to suit the type of advisory (e.g., Disinfect Water, Do Not Drink, Do Not Use) and primacy agency guidance. Be sure to provide links to additional information or guidance.

**Example of Quick Tips for a Disinfect Water Advisory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use Tap Water for:</th>
<th>Use Disinfected Water for:</th>
<th>Use Caution:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washing clothes</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>Most kitchen and other household water filters do not remove bacteria or viruses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(unless the water is cloudy)</td>
<td>Brushing teeth</td>
<td>Coffee makers, vending machines, and soda dispensers with a line to the water supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing hands</td>
<td>Washing fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>Bathing babies and young children (give sponge bath; use disinfected water that has cooled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking showers</td>
<td>Preparing food</td>
<td>Use clean, sanitized containers for storing disinfected water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for adults and older children)</td>
<td>Mixing baby formula</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flushing toilets</td>
<td>Making ice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Giving water to pets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example of Quick Tips for a Do Not Drink Advisory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use Tap Water for:</th>
<th>Use Bottled Water for:</th>
<th>Use Caution:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved actions will depend on the chemical or toxin present. A preliminary assessment of the contaminant must be completed before recommendations can be developed. In some instances, actions such as washing hands, flushing toilets, and showering with the contaminated tap water will be considered safe; in other instances, none or only a few of these actions will be permissible.</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>With appliances that use water. Many coffee makers, refrigerator water dispensers, vending machines, and soda dispensers have a line to the water supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brushing teeth</td>
<td>When bathing babies and young children as they might swallow water (give sponge bath and use bottled water)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Washing fruits and vegetables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing food</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Giving water to pets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Sample Message Map (CDC 2013)

Example message map-approach for a disinfect water advisory. Message mapping is used to define the key messages of the topic. In this technique, three key messages are defined for the topic and each message should have three supporting facts.

This is an example of a completed Disinfect Water Advisory message map.

\[ \text{Sample Message Map (CDC 2013)} \]

\[ \text{This is an example of a completed Disinfect Water Advisory message map.} \]

\[ \text{This more general term is used instead of “boil water orders” to reflect that customers may not be able to use natural gas stoves to boil water during an emergency, either due to explosion hazards or interruption of the natural gas supply.} \]
Contamination suspected/found in tap water. Take action before drinking or cooking.

Boil water for drinking and cooking.
- Fill a pot with water.
- Heat the water until bubbles come quickly from the bottom of the pot to the top.
- Keep heating the water for one more minute.
- Turn off the heat source and let the water cool.
- Pour water into a clean, sanitized container with a cover for storage.

Routine tests performed last night confirm the presence of *E.coli* bacteria in the water serving residents of [X] county.
- Your risk of illness after drinking this water is increased.
- The water utility is increasing the disinfectant levels and flushing the distribution system to eliminate the problem.
- Testing will continue until the problem is resolved. You will be informed of progress.

If you cannot boil water, disinfect it.
- If water is clear: Add 6 drops or 0.5 milliliters of unscented household bleach (with a concentration of 8.25%) per one (1) gallon of water, mix well, and then allow the water to stand for at least 30 minutes.
- If water is cloudy: Filter it, Add 12 drops, 1 milliliter, or 1/8 teaspoon of unscented household bleach (with a concentration of 8.25%) per one (1) gallon of water, mix well, and then allow the water to stand for at least 30 minutes.
- Store disinfected water in a clean container with a cover.
4. Frequently asked Questions and Answers (CDC 2013)

CDC Toolbox and Templates are available at https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/dwacomm-toolbox/tools-templates-main.html.

Frequently Asked Questions About Disinfect Water Advisories

PURPOSE

This list includes questions most often asked during disinfect water advisories. This information was developed from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), water system, and primacy agency materials. The content was adapted to help water systems provide customers with clear and concise information and actions to take.

Water systems are encouraged to use this information as a guide to help create their own fact sheets and other communication materials. Recommendations may vary depending on the circumstances and severity of water contamination. Select specific questions that are appropriate for each advisory situation.

This information is for Tier 1 Public Notices. For a waterborne disease outbreak, consult with local and state public health authorities to adapt the information.

While there are no federal regulations requiring disinfect water advisories, local authorities are responsible for issuing disinfect water advisories.

DIRECTIONS

- Brackets [ ] indicate places to insert specific information, such as the water system name, health department information, or the contaminant.
- Limit fact sheets for customers to one page front and back.
- Refer to the fact sheets from the “Tools and Templates” in Section 1 and Section 2 of this toolbox for additional topics.

Use the Q&As to develop scripts or fact sheets for water system staff, especially customer service and field crews. Uses include:

- Briefing materials for public health departments and other partners
- Media kits and updates
- Customer fact sheets
- Websites and online tools

Bottled Water

Should I drink bottled water during an advisory?

Yes. If bottled water is available, that is the best option until officials say otherwise. If you do not have bottled water available, the next best option is to disinfect your tap water to make it safe to drink.

1This more general term is used instead of “boil water orders” to reflect that customers may not be able to use natural gas stoves to boil water during an emergency, either due to explosion hazards or interruption of the natural gas supply.
Disinfecting Water by Boiling

I do not have bottled water available for drinking. How do I boil my water to make it safe to drink?

- Fill a pot with water.
- Heat the water until bubbles come quickly from the bottom of the pot to the top.
- Keep heating the water for one more minute.
- Turn off the heat source and let the water cool.
- Pour water into a clean, sanitized container with a cover for storage.

I don’t like the taste of boiled water. What can I do?

To improve the taste of boiled water you can:

- Pour cooled, boiled water back and forth from one clean glass or container into another to add air to the water, or
- Let the water stand for a few hours, or
- Add a pinch of salt to each quart of boiled water.

Why do I have to boil my water?

Your water may be, is contaminated by bacteria, virus, protozoa, parasite. Contamination may be, is due to equipment failure, leaking/broken pipes in the system, insufficient disinfectant in the water supply. The disinfect water advisory gives you information so you can take action to protect your health.

Disinfecting Water Using Household Bleach

I do not have bottled water for drinking and I cannot boil my water to make it safe to drink. How do I disinfect my water to make it safe to drink?

Caution: Water contaminated with fuel or a toxic chemical will not be made safe by boiling or disinfection. Use another source of water if you know or suspect that your water might be contaminated with fuel or a toxic chemical.

You will need a clean, sanitized container to store any water you disinfect. We recommend you clean and sanitize your container before you start to disinfect your water by following these steps:

1. Wash the storage container with dishwashing soap and water and rinse completely.
2. Sanitize the container with a solution made by mixing 1 teaspoon of unscented household bleach (bleach that does not have an added scent) in one quart (32 ounces, 4 cups, or about 1 liter) of water.
3. Cover the container and shake it well so that the sanitizing bleach solution touches all inside surfaces of the container.
4. Wait at least 30 seconds and then pour the sanitizing solution out of the container.
5. Let the empty sanitized container air-dry before use OR rinse the empty container with clean, safe water that is available already.

Note: When preparing safe water, it is best to use food grade water storage containers, such as those found at surplus or camping supply stores.
If you are not able to use a food grade water storage container, be sure the container you choose:
  - Has a top that can be closed tightly
  - Is made of durable, unbreakable materials (i.e. not glass)

**DO NOT USE** containers that previously have been used to hold liquid or solid toxic chemicals (bleach, pesticides, etc.)

**To disinfect your tap water**

If the tap water is clear:
  - Use unscented household bleach (bleach that does not have an added scent). The label should say that it contains 8.25% of sodium hypochlorite.
  - Add 6 drops (using a medicine dropper) or 0.5 milliliters of bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
  - Mix well and wait 30 minutes or more before drinking.
  - Store disinfected water in a clean, sanitized container with a cover.

If the tap water is cloudy:
  - Filter through a clean cloth
  - Use unscented household bleach (bleach that does not have an added scent). The label should say that it contains 8.25% of sodium hypochlorite.
  - Add 12 drops (using a medicine dropper), 1 milliliter, or 1/8 teaspoon of bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
  - Mix well and wait 30 minutes or more before drinking.
  - Store disinfected water in a clean, sanitized container with a cover.

**Food and Beverages**

**Can I use my coffee maker, ice machine, or water or soda dispenser?**

Do not use water from any appliance connected to your water lines. This includes the water and ice dispensers in your refrigerator/freezer. Most kitchen and other household water filters typically do not remove or kill all bacteria or viruses.
  - Use bottled, boiled, or disinfected water to make coffee and ice.
  - When the disinfect water advisory is lifted, consult the owner’s manual to find out how to sanitize appliances.

**Can I use ice from my refrigerator/freezer?**

  - Do not use ice from ice trays, ice dispensers, or ice makers.
  - Throw out all ice made with tap water.
  - Make new ice with bottled, boiled, or disinfected water.

**What should I do about preparing food and beverages? How should I wash fruit, vegetables, and food preparation surfaces?**

  - Wash fruits and vegetables with bottled, boiled, or disinfected water.
- Use bottled or disinfected water to cook food.
- Use bottled, boiled, or disinfected water when preparing drinks, such as coffee, tea, and lemonade.
- Wash food preparation surfaces with bottled, boiled, or disinfected water.

**What should I do about feeding my baby?**

Breastfeeding is best. Continue to breastfeed. If breastfeeding is not an option:

- Use ready-to-use baby formula, if possible.
- Prepare powdered or concentrated baby formula with bottled water. Use disinfected water if you do not have bottled water.
- Wash and sterilize bottles and nipples before use with bottled or disinfected water.
- If you cannot sterilize bottles, try to use single-serve, ready-to-feed bottles.

**How do I wash dishes during a disinfect water advisory?**

Use disposable plates, cups, and utensils, if possible. If you do not have disposable dishes, follow the instructions below.

Household dishwashers generally are safe to use. If possible, set your dishwasher so it is using a hot water rinse or sanitizing cycle.

To wash dishes by hand:

- Wash and rinse the dishes as you normally would using hot water.
- In a separate basin, add 1 teaspoon of unscented household liquid bleach for each gallon of warm water.
- Soak the rinsed dishes in the water for at least 1 minute.
- Let the dishes air dry completely before using them again.

**Health**

**I already drank the water. Will I get sick?**

Most people who happen to drink this water will not get sick. If you do get sick, the symptoms are similar to food poisoning: nausea, diarrhea, cramps, and possibly a mild fever.

**What should I do if I have symptoms?**

The most important thing to do is avoid dehydration. Drink plenty of fluids and avoid drinks with caffeine, such as soda, coffee, and tea. If you are concerned about your health or the health of a family member, contact your healthcare provider or [local health department].

**Household Information**

*Note: Some of the answers related to pet health may need to be customized once the nature of the contaminant or chemical is known and its effects on animal health is determined.*

**Should I give my pets disinfected water?**

Yes. Pets can get sick from the same contaminants as people. It is a good idea to give them bottled, boiled, or disinfected water. Boiled water should always be cooled before using.
Do I need to worry about my fish or aquatic pets (e.g., reptiles, frogs)?

Most germs that infect people do not infect reptiles or fish. If your water system is using more chlorine or changing disinfection, be cautious about changing the water in your fish tank or aquarium. Standard aquarium operations require removal of chlorine and chloramines, which can be toxic to fish and reptiles.

Contact your local pet store or veterinarian for more information.

Is it safe to water my garden and house plants?

Yes, you can use the tap water for household plants and gardens.

Is it safe to let my children play in a kiddie pool filled with tap water?

No. Due to the high chance that children will get water in their mouth while playing in a kiddie pool, we recommend that you avoid using your kiddie pool during the disinfect water advisory.

What [microbe, organisms, germs, bacteria] might be in the water?

Many types of microbes could be in the water. Water systems are concerned about bacteria such as shigella, viruses such as norovirus, and parasites such as Cryptosporidium.

Human illness from these microbes is usually caused by eating raw or undercooked food, ingesting contaminated recreational or other untreated water, or poor hand-washing. Diarrheal illness from these microbes is not usually life threatening, except in the elderly, the very young, or those with weak immune systems. If you are concerned, consult your healthcare provider or contact [local health department].

Hygiene

Can I use tap water to wash my hands?

In many situations, you can use tap water and soap to wash your hands. Follow the guidance of your local public health officials or emergency managers. Be sure to scrub your hands with soap and water (warm or cold) for 20 seconds and rinse them well under running water. It is important to dry hands completely with a towel or by letting them air dry.

Can I use tap water to brush my teeth?

No. Use bottled water or boiled water that has cooled to brush your teeth.

Is it safe to take a shower or bath?

Yes, it is safe to take a bath or shower, but be careful not to swallow any water. Use caution when bathing babies and young children. Consider giving them a sponge bath to reduce the chance of them swallowing water.

What about shaving?

Yes, you can shave as usual.

What about doing laundry?

Yes, it is safe to do laundry as usual.
Frequently Asked Questions About Do Not Drink Water Advisories

Note: A number of questions likely to arise in this type of contamination incident, such as the ability to use the water for things like handwashing and showering, will depend on the specific nature of the contaminant in question. Once the water utility has identified the contaminant, it will be able to better tailor its responses to these types of questions.

PURPOSE

This list includes questions most often asked during a “Do Not Drink” water advisory. The content was adapted to help water systems provide customers with clear and concise information and actions to take.

Water systems are encouraged to use this information as a guide to help create their own fact sheets and other communication materials. Recommendations may vary depending on the circumstances and the severity of water contamination. Select specific questions that are appropriate for each advisory situation.

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- Briefing materials for public health departments and other partners
- Media kits and updates
- Customer fact sheets
- Websites and online tools

Drinking Water

Can I disinfect my water to make it safe to drink?
No. Because of the nature of the water contamination, disinfecting your water will not make it safe to drink. Use only bottled water for drinking.

Can I disinfect my water to make it safe to drink?
No. Because of the nature of the water contamination, disinfecting your water will not make it safe to drink. Use only bottled water for drinking.

Should I use bottled water?
Yes. Bottled water is the only water that is safe to drink at this time until further notice. Bottled water is available at [insert locations here].
**Food and Beverages**

**Can I use my coffee maker, ice machine, water dispenser, or soda dispenser?**

No. Do not use water from any appliance connected to your water lines. This includes the water and ice dispensers in your refrigerator/freezer and dishwasher. If your appliance is not connected to your water line (e.g., a free standing coffee maker), you can use it, but use bottled water in place of tap water.

When the advisory is lifted, consult the owner’s manual to find out how to flush and sanitize appliances.

**Can I use ice from my refrigerator/freezer?**

No.

- Do not use ice from ice trays, ice dispensers, or ice makers.
- Throw out all ice made with tap water.

**Can I use tap water to cook food (such as pasta, rice, noodles, etc.)?**

No. Until you receive updated instruction from local officials, bottled water should be used for food preparation.

**What should I do about preparing food and beverages? How should I wash fruit, vegetables, and food preparation surfaces?**

- Wash fruits and vegetables with bottled water.
- Prepare drinks, such as coffee, tea, and lemonade with bottled water.
- Wash food preparation surfaces with bottled water.

**What should I do about feeding my baby?**

Breastfeeding is best. Continue to breastfeed. If breastfeeding is not an option:

- Use ready-to-use baby formula, if possible.
- Prepare powdered or concentrated baby formula with bottled water.
- Wash and sterilize bottles and nipples with bottled water before use.
- If you cannot sterilize bottles, try to use single-serve, ready-to-feed bottles.

**How do I wash dishes?**

Use disposable plates, cups, and utensils, if possible. If you do not have disposable dishes, wash dishes by hand and use only bottled water and dish soap.

**Health**

**What should I do if already drank the water?**

If you are concerned about your health or the health of a family member, contact your healthcare provider or [local health department].
**Household Information**

**Should I give my pets bottled water?**
Pets can get some of the same diseases as people, so it is a good idea to give them bottled water, as well.

**Do I need to worry about my fish or aquatic pets (e.g., reptiles, frogs)?**
Contact your local pet store or veterinarian for more advice.

**Is it safe to water my garden and house plants?**
Follow the guidance of your local health authorities for advice on using tap water for household plants and gardens.

**Is it safe to let my children play in a kiddie pool filled with tap water?**
No. Due to the high chance that children will get water in their mouth while playing in a kiddie pool, we recommend that you avoid using your kiddie pool during the advisory.

**Hygiene**

**Can I use tap water to wash my hands?**
Follow the guidance of your local health authorities or water utility for advice on using tap water to wash hands.

**Can I use tap water to brush my teeth?**
No. Use bottled water to brush your teeth.

**Is it safe to take a shower or bath?**
Follow the guidance of your local health authorities or water utility for advice on using tap water for showering and bathing.

**What about doing laundry?**
Follow the guidance of your local health authorities or water utility for advice on doing laundry.

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**Frequently Asked Questions About What to Do After a Drinking Water Advisory**

**When I turn on the faucet, the water sputters. Why?**
You have air in your lines. Turn on your tap slowly and run the water until the sputtering stops.

**The water is discolored. What should I do?**
Flush water pipes by running the water from all of your taps until it is clear. There is more information below on how to flush your pipes.
Do not wash clothes if the water is discolored. Wait until the water runs clear at the tap. Wash a load of dark clothes first.

**Why does my water have a strong smell?**
The smell is probably chlorine. Often, water systems will increase chlorine levels to disinfect the pipes.

**What should I do if my water pressure is low?**
Check the faucet screens for trapped particles. Remove the screens and clean out any particles. Put the screens back on the faucet.

**Do I need to clean out my faucets?**
Yes. You should flush your faucets after the drinking water advisory.
- Turn on the main water valve.
- Turn on the cold and hot water taps at all faucets and run the water for [X] minutes. Begin with the faucet that is highest up in your home or building and then open the other faucets one at a time moving from the highest floor to the lowest.
- Ensure that there is adequate ventilation/air flow when flushing the faucets.

**Do I need to clean appliances?**
Yes. Read the owner’s manual for directions to clean appliances such as water softeners and filter units.

**My refrigerator has a water dispenser/ice maker. Do I need to clean them?**
Yes. To flush refrigerator water dispensers and ice makers connected to a filter, take the following steps:
1. Flush the refrigerator water by running it for [X] minutes.
2. Throw away all ice.
3. Let the ice maker container fill up completely one more time and throw away the new ice.
4. Clean the ice maker container.
5. Remove the filter and replace it with a new one.

**Do I need to do something for the water softener?**
Yes. You may need to run through a regeneration cycle. Follow the directions in the owner’s manual.

**I have a water treatment unit for the house. Does it need special care?**
Yes. Change the filter cartridges. Some units need disinfecting. Follow the directions in the owner’s manual.
6. **Boil Water, Technical Brief (WHO)**

This is a quick technical summary on boiling times for inactivation of different micro-organism. The factsheet is available at: [http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/boiling-water/en/](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/boiling-water/en/)

7. **How to flush household plumbing after service restored (New Jersey Example, the utilities should develop their own)**

West Virginia, American Water had published a guidance for flushing household piping. This is a nice example that you could create together for this area and be able to give to your customers or include in the website. The West Virginia American Water example is available at: [https://www.wvdhhr.org/HowFlushPlumbingSystem.pdf](https://www.wvdhhr.org/HowFlushPlumbingSystem.pdf)

8. **Conservation Messages**

Include your refined conservation message examples that could be included in the news releases or public notices as needed.
Appendix I: Determining Potability of Regional Water Supply
# Appendix J: Policies and Agreements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>File Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Talking to Media</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Using Social Media</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Release of information to the public</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreements</th>
<th>File Name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Emergency Communications Protocol</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Agreement on Forming Joint Information Center in an Emergency</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Agreement with ABC water system to provide communication support in an emergency</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


### Appendix K: List of Resources Needed to Implement this Plan

Example on Recommended Public Information Office Equipment and Supplies Checklist (Develop your own list)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office Equipment and Supplies:</th>
<th>Qty:</th>
<th>Details/Comments:</th>
<th>Where Stored:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Computers (LAN capable, high-speed Internet, email, CD/DVD burners, office software)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media contact list, emergency plans, etc. in electronic form</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference materials (emergency plans, AP style guide, dictionary, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printers (color, ink cartridges, paper)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storage media (blank CDs, DVDs, discs, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copiers (portable; toner, paper)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax machines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phones (automated answering system, TTY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference room (suitable for news conferences)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TV (cable compatible, for monitoring news networks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>VCR/DVR (for recording news broadcasts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DVD player</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOAA Weather Radio (to receive emergency alerts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper shredder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camcorder (w/tripod, etc.; for recording news conferences, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital camera (tripod, flash, memory cards, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LCD projector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portable sound system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portable podium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easel stands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folders, dividers, colored paper, etc. (for preparing media kits and flyers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>800 MHz portable radio (s)</td>
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