

Boiling of Water Supplies

Description:

This document provides guidance to ensure water is safe to drink following a disaster or event.

Introduction:

In areas affected by flooding it is not possible to guarantee safe drinking water.

Public health significance:

During and after a disaster, water can become contaminated with micro-organisms, such as bacteria from dead animals and sewage that can cause illness or death.

Action to take:

During and after a disaster, water can become contaminated with micro-organisms, such as As a precautionary measure it is recommended that drinking water in areas affected by floods and where water is discoloured be boiled before consumption.

Queensland Health recommends that, where possible, water should be brought to a rolling boil for around one minute before being used for drinking, food preparation or making ice. This simple precautionary measure should ensure that any risk to public health attributable to a contaminated water supply is minimised.

In the event of a threat to the water supply, monitoring of water quality will take place.

Acknowledgement:

Information for this document was sourced from the Queensland Health Central Population Health Unit Network Disaster Plan.

Related links:

- Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) at website: www.emergency.qld.gov.au/emq/css/beprepared.asp
- Emergency Management Australia Community Awareness Publications at website: www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/Publications