

## WHAT TO DO WHEN A PRECAUTIONARY BOIL WATER NOTICE IS ISSUED FOR YOUR AREA

When there is a loss in water pressure, either due to a broken water pipe or a scheduled outage for repairs, a Precautionary Boil Water Notice (PBWN) will be issued. If the number of affected members is small, then each member will be informed individually using a printed notice hung on the front door. Otherwise, the notice will be provided for broadcast from the local radio and/or television station.

Water pressure keeps unhealthy pollutants from entering the underground pipes that bring drinking water to your house or business. When the pressure is lost, either due to a broken water main or a scheduled outage, contaminants can seep into the pipes. This might allow pathogens (disease-causing germs) into the water that can cause illness if one drinks it or prepares food or beverages with it. So, as a precaution, it is important to disinfect tap water to kill any bacteria or viruses that may have entered the water.

Under a PBWN, water used for consumption can be disinfected by any one of the following methods:

- \* Bringing the water to a rolling boil and holding it there for one (1) minute,
- \* If you cannot boil water, such as during a power outage, use a disinfecting chemical. You should put eight (8) drops of common household bleach which is about 1/8th teaspoon, into one (1) gallon of tap water, then shake it, and allow it to stand for 30 minutes before drinking. If the water is cloudy, use sixteen (16) drops, about ¼ teaspoon of bleach instead of 8, shake it, and let it stand for 30 minutes. There should be a slight chlorine odor. Use common household bleach that has 5 to 6% active ingredients. Use food grade containers. Don't use bleach that has perfume scents added.
- \* Using water purification tables or iodine that many sports and camping stores sell.
- \* You can also buy commercial bottled water for consumption and food preparation.

These methods are in accordance with the Department of Health's Guidelines which can be found online at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/water/manual/boil.htm>.

Consumption includes brushing teeth, washing fruits and vegetables, and homemade ice. Tap water may be used for showering, baths, shaving and washing, so long as care is taken not to swallow or allow water in eyes or nose or mouth. Children and disabled individuals should have their bath supervised to ensure water is not ingested. The time spent bathing should be minimized. Though the risk of illness is minimal, individuals who have recent surgical wounds, are immunosuppressed, or have a chronic illness may want to consider using bottled or boiled water for cleansing until the notice is lifted.

Businesses and non-residential sites should take steps such as posting notices at, or disabling water fountains and ice machines during the PBWN. If you provide water to visitors or employees, use commercially produced bottled water for drinking or beverage preparation (coffee). Food service operations have additional requirements from their regulatory agency.

After the water system is repaired, and the pressure is restored in the pipes to your home or business, the precautionary boil water notice will remain in effect for one to several days while bacteria tests are conducted to assure the safety of the water. The notice will be lifted (rescinded) only after tests prove the water is safe to drink. When a small number of members are affected, the rescind notice will be delivered similar to delivery of the boil water notice. Otherwise, the media will be provided information updates and you should listen for this important information on the radio and/or from the television.

The employees of Talquin Water and Wastewater, Inc. take great care in assuring that your water is safe to drink. We appreciate your cooperation with the Precautionary Boil Water Notice policy which ensures public health during water outages. Please call the Water Department at (850) 562-2115 during normal business hours if you have questions or concerns. The County Health Department can also assist you with answers to your questions.