



Inside this issue:

- Emergency Water Supply
- Outreach Program Grants
- Don't Forget to Winterize!

## From the Tap...

### Emergency Water Supply

Water is a basic daily requirement. Clean, safe water is essential to good health. Simply put, we must have water to live. Your home or business is connected to our water supply system which provides virtually unlimited access to clean water. But what do you do if something interrupts that access?

Any scenario in which the water supply may be interrupted, be it natural or man-made, has its challenges. However, being prepared will help to minimize the impacts of such an occurrence. We offer a few thoughts in basic preparation and steps you can take to be ready in case of an emergency.

Forewarned is forearmed. Stay tuned to current events, news and weather. In the event of an emergency, authorities will communicate to the public



Boiling water for one minute will kill disease causing microorganisms.

through the media outlets (television/radio/newspaper).

Have a family/business disaster plan and build a basic survival kit. There are many resources available that give instructions for creating such an emergency plan. At the end of this article, we have listed a number of or-

ganizations that provide information for creating your own plan.

In case of an emergency, water must be treated as the precious resource that it is and be used wisely and conservatively. Should a public supply of water not be available, water may be boiled or treated chemically to make it



safe for consumption. Vigorously boiling water for one minute will kill any disease-causing microorganisms present in water. The flat taste of boiled water can be improved by pouring it back and forth from one container to another (called aeration), by allowing it to stand for a few hours, or by adding a small pinch of salt for each quart of water boiled. Chlorine bleach or iodine tablets can be used for chemical treatment.\* Both the EPA and the Virginia Department of Health have guides for disinfecting water.

Storing water is a good idea and should be part of your family survival plan. Water should be stored in

Continued on page 2

\*Information obtained from USEPA <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/faq/emerg.html> 11/21/05

### Outreach Program Grant Applications Available in January

Each year, Fairfax Water provides funding and technical support to qualified organizations that undertake water supply education or watershed protection projects.

Guidelines and application forms are available on our web site, [www.fairfaxwater.org](http://www.fairfaxwater.org), under Outreach, Grants, and Conservation. The Guidelines provide information on eligible projects, the geographic area which may be covered by the projects, eligible organizations, and the selection process.

If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact Traci Kammer Goldberg by telephone at (703)289 6306 or by email at [tgoldberg@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:tgoldberg@fairfaxwater.org).

Information can also be obtained by sending a request to:  
Fairfax Water  
Outreach Program  
8570 Executive Park Avenue  
Fairfax, VA 22031

## Emergency Water Supply

Continued From Page 1

clean, non-metallic, tightly closed containers in a cool, dark area such as a basement. Storage containers should be kept away from chemical containers, as chemical vapors may intrude into the water storage containers.

For more information please see the following resources:

- <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/>
- <http://www.epa.gov/OGWDW/faq/emerg.html>
- <http://www.redcrossdc.org>
- <http://www.makeaplan.org/>
- <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/dw/index.asp>

## Don't Forget to Winterize!

There are several measures that can be taken to prevent winter water disasters. Below, we describe a few of the basics.

- Locate and mark the main water cutoff valve for your home. This cutoff valve is usually found near where the water line comes into your house.
- Make sure the water line to outside faucets is turned off and the lines are drained.
- If you will be away from your home for an extended period, keep the thermostat at a reasonable temperature to make sure all areas with water pipes are kept above freezing. If you cannot maintain heat inside your home, you should take further steps to prevent damage, such as turning off the main water supply and draining your plumbing.

### What do I do if my water meter freezes?

If you suspect you have a frozen water meter, call us for help. Our service crews are available 24 hours a day and will respond as soon as possible to your request. You can reach our Customer Service Department at (703) 698-5800. The after hours emergency number is (703) 698-5613.

### Emergency Disinfection of Water – Chlorine Bleach\*

When boiling is not practical, chemical disinfection should be used. Common household bleach contains a chlorine compound that will disinfect water. The procedure to be followed is usually written on the label. When the necessary procedure is not given, find the percentage of available chlorine on the label and use the information in the following tabulation as a guide.

Available Chlorine	Drops per Quart of <u>Clear Water</u>
1%	10
4-6%	2
7-10%	1

If strength is unknown, add ten drops per quart of water. Double amount of chlorine for cloudy or colored water or water that is extremely cold.

The treated water should be mixed thoroughly and allowed to stand, preferably covered, for 30 minutes. The water should have a slight chlorine odor; if not, repeat the dosage and allow the water to stand for an additional 15 minutes. If the treated water has too strong a chlorine taste, it can be made more pleasing by allowing the water to stand exposed to the air for a few hours or by pouring it from one clean container to another several times.

\*Information obtained from USEPA <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/faq/emerg.html> 11/21/05 (underlining added)

## Editor's Note

If you have comments or suggestions about this publication, let us hear from you.

E-mail us at [jbailey@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:jbailey@fairfaxwater.org) or write us at the address below. If you have questions regarding water service, please call Customer Service at (703) 698-5800.

For all other departments, call (703) 698-5600; After-hours emergency, call (703) 698-5613, TTY (703) 698-7025.

Fairfax Water  
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 Fairfax, VA 22031  
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