



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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State environmental officials offer tips in case Hurricane Irene impacts drinking water

RALEIGH – As Hurricane Irene nears North Carolina’s coast, state drinking water experts are advising residents in potentially affected areas they may need to take precautions to keep their drinking water safe.

Though the path of the storm and the scope of its impacts are not yet known, people in areas who are likely to receive flooding from heavy rainfall or storm surge need to take steps to keep their drinking water safe. Flooded public and private wells, flooded water treatment plants and pressure losses from broken lines and lost electrical power greatly increase the risk from contaminated water.

State and local officials will issue announcements through the media to notify the public of affected counties, areas and water systems. They will also issue notices when the problems are resolved. Once notified of the need to boil water or use bottled water, residents in affected areas should continue to boil or disinfect their water or use alternate supplies until samples taken show the water to be safe.

Customers of public water systems should contact their utilities or operators for information on the water quality.

“If you lose power, conserve water until you know your water system is up and running,” said Jessica Godreau, chief of the state’s public water supply section. “If public water supplies lose power too, they may be operating on limited emergency systems until power is restored and testing is performed.”

The public water supply section website, <http://www.ncwater.org/pws/>, provides links to detailed information about drinking water during and after an emergency. Individuals are advised to review these guidance documents in detail before an event and print a copy for your emergency supplies.

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