

Safe Water

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is sharing guidance on actions people can take to ensure water is safe and to prevent waterborne disease or illness after the storm.

Identify Safe Water

It is critical that people do not use contaminated water to drink, wash and prepare food, make ice, prepare baby formula, wash dishes, brush teeth or wash hands.

- Do not use contaminated well water. Floods can damage drinking water wells and lead to contamination. Floodwater can contaminate well water with livestock waste, human sewage, chemicals and other contaminants that can lead to illness when used for drinking, bathing and other hygiene activities. Hand dug wells, bored wells and others may be contaminated, even if damage is not visible.
- Do not use water from heating systems. Water from radiators or boilers that are part of a home heating system should never be used for drinking or personal hygiene.

Use Bottled, Boiled or Treated Water for Drinking, Cooking and Personal Hygiene

- If you do not have safe bottled water, boil your water to make it safe to drink. Boiling is the best way to kill germs in water. If the water is cloudy, first filter it through a clean cloth, paper towel or coffee filter. Another option is to let any particles in the water settle to the bottom, then draw off the clear water for boiling.
 - Bring the clear water to a rolling boil for one minute (at elevations above 6,500 feet, boil for three minutes). Let the boiled water cool, then store in clean, sanitized containers with tight covers. Do not use gas appliances in an enclosed space to boil water as this increases the [risk of carbon monoxide poisoning](#).

- If you can't boil water, disinfect it using household bleach. Bleach will kill some, but not all, types of disease-causing organisms that may be in the water. If the water is cloudy, filter it through clean cloths or allow it to settle, then draw off the clear water for disinfection. Add 1/8 teaspoon (or 8 drops) of regular, unscented, liquid household bleach for each gallon of water, stir it well and let it stand for 30 minutes before use. Store disinfected water in clean containers with covers.

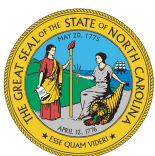
Finding Emergency Water Sources

Alternative sources of clean water can be found inside and outside the home. The following are possible sources of water:

- Water from your home's water heater tank (part of your drinking water system, not your home heating system)
- Melted ice cubes made with water that has not been contaminated
- Water from your home's toilet tank (not from the bowl), if it is clear and has not been chemically treated with toilet cleaners such as those that change the color of the water
- Liquid from undamaged canned fruit and vegetables
- Water from swimming pools, spas and collected rainwater can be used for personal hygiene and cleaning, **but not for drinking**.



For food assistance and additional storm recovery help, please call 2-1-1.



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