

DRINKING WATER ADVISORY

Volcano Ash and how it may affect our public drinking water system

When volcano ash spills into the air and falls to the ground it may adversely impact our public water system. Ash may cause an increase in turbidity in our surface water source and may clog the filters in the water treatment plant. When turbidity is high, it can interfere with disinfection. Since our water system uses surface water, we need disinfection to kill disease-causing micro-organisms such as bacteria, viruses and protozoan. If we are impacted by volcano ash, we will run the water treatment plant as long as it is safe to do so and we will increase the chlorine levels and backwash the filters to try to keep the turbidities down. However, if you should notice ash in your water you should not use it for drinking water purposes.

In the event that the plant shuts down we will notify you. If we are not filtering/making water, the amount of water we will have in storage will be limited. Water conservation measures may be necessary in order to save water for fire protection and other essential services.

PLEASE NOTE: Alaska's emergency service personnel recommend that each individual have enough bottled drinking water on hand to last seven days for any type of emergency (volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, etc.) We also recommend that you use bottled water for all drinking and cooking purposes during times of ash fall. *In extreme emergencies, boiling water with ash in it for 'one minute' will kill the microbes, but it can also concentrate the inorganics in the water and some concentrated inorganic chemicals can be harmful to your health. Therefore, it is better to have enough stored bottled water on hand to last through the emergency.*

If an eruption should occur, we will not know if the water is safe to drink until we take additional water tests after the ash fall has subsided. If ash gets into our distribution lines, we will flush and disinfect the lines after the problem has subsided, and we will take additional water tests to ensure that our water continues to be safe to drink.

If you have questions regarding how to prepare your home for an emergency such as volcanic ash or earthquakes, you may call the Alaska Homeland Security and Emergency Management Office at 1-800-478-2337, or see their internet website at www.ak-prepared.com.

Additional information on how to prepare for a volcanic eruption can also be found at the State of Alaska's Air Quality Division's website: <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/volcano.htm>

We are also attaching literature about how to prepare for a volcano eruption and what to do after the eruption occurs. See the attached flyer entitled 'Ash Alert!'

***Emergency Response Begins Before the Emergency Happens. Be Prepared.
Please have bottled water on hand in case the water treatment plant needs to shut down during emergencies.***