



June 10, 2020

To: Public Water Systems

**Subject:** Issuance of Precautionary Boil Water Notices during Hurricanes, Tropical Storms, or Other Unforeseen Emergencies for Public Water Systems

Dear Water System Owner/Manager:

With the start of the 2020 hurricane season, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) would like to provide you with some information regarding precautionary boil water notices (PBWNs) and DEP's emergency event tracking Database. The goal of distributing this information is to ensure effective communication and consistency between DEP, DOH, the county health departments, the impacted water system, and the water customers.

When a PBWN is issued due to an emergency, the impacted water system is required to notify their customers as soon as possible. The impacted water system must also consult with their regulatory agency (DEP District Office or Approved County Health Department (ACHD)) as soon as possible. Where DEP is the regulatory agency, the local county health department (CHD) must also be notified. A checklist to assist in the PBWN process is enclosed. Examples of PBWN may be found at: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/drinking-water/boil-water-notice-guidance.html>

We are also providing Community Public Water Systems with a PBWN fact sheet (Precautionary Boil Water Notice- What Should You Do?). The fact sheet explains what your customer can expect if a PBWN has been issued and the water system's requirements to rescind it. **We encourage you to provide this fact sheet to your customers during their next billing cycle and post it to your webpage to ensure this information is readily available BEFORE an emergency.** You may also supplement it with local information that you deem important.

In addition to the PBWN checklist and fact sheet, we are also providing you with information on DEP's emergency event tracking Database. DEP is transitioning from the StormTracker database to the WaterTracker database, an updated and more robust emergency event tracking database. The StormTracker database allows facilities to update their status (fully operational, partially operational, non-operational) immediately following a storm event. The facility may also use StormTracker to request assistance (personnel, equipment, fuel, etc.). The WaterTracker database will have these same functions. StormTracker database will remain available until sufficient training and guidance has been provided on the WaterTracker database.

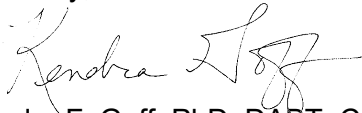
Once the impacted counties are known following a storm event, DEP will activate the counties in the emergency event tracking database and provide notice of activation to those counties. To facilitate in the recovery efforts and expedite response, WATERTracker is to be updated by the impacted facilities as soon as practicable. You can access WATER Tracker at <https://www.flwatertracker.com>.

During an emergency, it may be necessary to transport drinking water to facilities, individuals, or organizations. The drinking water supply must be safe and properly handled or additional public health problems may occur. A new Interagency Bulk Water Transport guidance was developed and can be found at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/drinking-water/documents/emer-bulk-transp-use-drink-water.pdf>

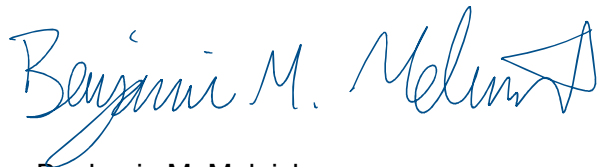
If you have any questions regarding Water Tracker, please contact either your DEP District Office Drinking Water Program or ACHD Office Drinking Water Section. The list of contacts can be found here <https://floridadep.gov/water/source-drinking-water/content/organization-drinking-water-program>.

For questions regarding PBWNs, please contact your county health department. The list of CHD contacts can be found here <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/county-health-departments/find-a-county-health-department/index.html>.

Sincerely,



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Florida Department of Health



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Enclosures

## **Boil Water Notice (BWN) Checklist**

This checklist is designed to help Non-Community Public Water System (PWS) owners and operators comply with boil water notice (BWN) requirements found in Chapters 62-555 and 62-560, Florida Administrative Code (FAC), and the Department of Health Guidelines for the Issuance of Precautionary BWNs.

It is the water system owner's responsibility to provide public notification to its affected consumers.

If your facility remains open to the public when it has a power outage or drinking water system malfunction that results in zero pressure in your plumbing; you must:

- Notify the customers that a boil water notice (BWN) is in effect and tap water is NOT available for consumption (62-560.410(1)(a), (c), & (d), FAC):
  - **Post notices in conspicuous places at accessible water and piped-water-mixed beverage outlets within your establishment.**
- Contact your drinking water regulatory agency (DEP District Office or ACHD) no later than noon the next business day (62-555.350(10)(b) FAC).

Regulatory Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

- Also notify your local County Health Department (CHD) if your regulatory agency is the DEP District Office (62-555.335(18), FAC). CHD phone list: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/county-health-departments/find-a-county-health-department/index.html>
- If you prepare or process food, your regulatory food agency must also be notified of the BWN.
- Complete corrective actions to the water system, restore pressure and disinfectant residual, perform plumbing flushing, dispose of ice made during the BWN.
- Unless otherwise directed by your regulatory agency, collect bacteriological samples (62-555.340(2), (3), FAC) as follows:
  - For a non-community public water system, two (2) water samples collected at locations where water is available for consumption (taps or fixtures).
  - Collect samples in a sanitary manner, then transport on ice to a DOH certified laboratory for analysis within 30 hours of collection.
- One (1) day's test of satisfactory samples is required for a pressure loss BWN (62-555.340(2)(a)(b), FAC), unless a water main break occurred, then two (2) days of tests are required.
- Send a copy of lab test results to your regulatory agency; DEP or the ACHD (62-555.340(2)(c), FAC), or have the lab send it.
- Regulatory agency approval must be received to rescind the BWN (62-555.340(5) FAC).
- If this is a regulated food establishment, and continues to process food, you must also follow the instructions in **Industry Bulletin for Florida's Food Industry, Boil Water Notice Guidelines.**

**Accessible via** <http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/drinking-water/2019-hurricane-letter-food-bulletin-bwn-guidelines.pdf>