

**Are you prepared to communicate with the Office of Drinking Water in the aftermath of a hurricane, natural disaster, or other waterworks emergency?**

After any natural disaster (particularly widespread events, such as hurricanes) you should inform the ODW Field Office of your waterworks' status:

- Was service interrupted?
- Is power available?
- How long can the waterworks continue to supply water from storage?
- Was the source flooded?
- Have customers been advised to boil their tap water?

As the waterworks owner or operator, you should not wait to be contacted by an ODW representative, but should initiate contact with ODW to provide this information. Even if your waterworks has not been adversely affected by a natural disaster, you should contact the ODW Field Office with a status report after a major storm. This will enable ODW to direct recovery resources to waterworks and communities in greatest need for assistance. Your primary ODW contacts during a waterworks emergency will be the ODW personnel you normally interact with at the Field Office serving your area.

To reach ODW staff after normal business hours at night, and on weekends and holidays, use the phone number below. Your call will be answered by a 24-hr call center. When you speak to the Call Center personnel let them know you are from a water works attempting to get a hold of the Office of Drinking Water. An Office of Drinking Water employee will return your call once received from the Call Center.

**(866) 531-3068** (toll free)

If the emergency situation is one that requires assistance from the local fire department, law enforcement, emergency medical providers, or hazardous materials (HAZMAT) responders, call 911 immediately.

**Contacts:**

Police: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire: \_\_\_\_\_

EMA: \_\_\_\_\_

Health: \_\_\_\_\_

VDH Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Electric Utility: \_\_\_\_\_

Lab: \_\_\_\_\_

**Organizations That Can Help:**

Your Local Emergency Management Agency (EMA)  
<https://lemd.vdem.virginia.gov/Public/Default.aspx>

Virginia WARN  
[www.vawarn.org](http://www.vawarn.org) • 757-363-1760

Virginia Rural Water Association  
[www.vrwa.org](http://www.vrwa.org) • 540-261-7178

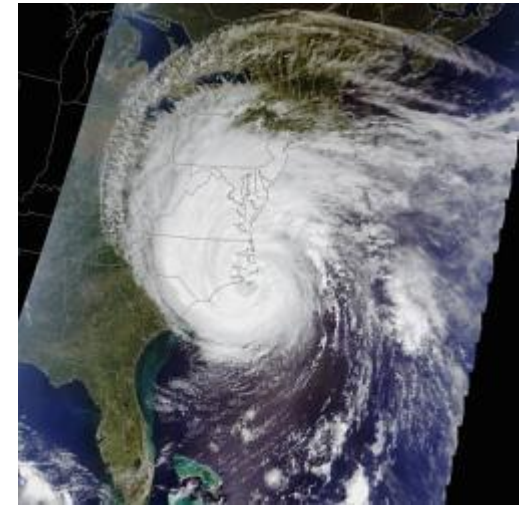
Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project  
[www.southeastrcap.org](http://www.southeastrcap.org) • 866-928-3731

VDH Office of Drinking Water  
[www.vdh.virginia.gov/drinkingwater/contacts](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/drinkingwater/contacts)  
804-864-7500

Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders (WISER) • <http://wiser.nlm.nih.gov/>

CHEMTREC  
[www.chemtrec.com/](http://www.chemtrec.com/) • 800-262-8200

# Atlantic Hurricane Season Begins June 1



## Are you prepared to communicate with your waterworks customers?



Use this checklist as you review and update your waterworks emergency communications plan.

Does your plan take all of these items into account? Do you have copies of all of the underlined communication tools available? Don't have a plan? Start planning now!

The Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water (ODW) wants to remind the owners and operators of Virginia's public water supplies that hurricane season begins June 1. Because most hurricane activity in our region typically does not occur until late summer and early autumn, now is an excellent time to review and update your plans to communicate with your waterworks customers in the event of a hurricane or other natural disaster.

ODW has prepared a comprehensive guide to assist you with emergency communications with your waterworks customers. The guide describes requirements and techniques for getting your message to customers if the water supply has been impacted by a natural disaster, making the water potentially unsafe to drink. Included in the guide are printed notices and literature to help you effectively deliver emergency messages to customers.



Copies of the guide and all of the notices and documents referenced in this brochure can be downloaded from the ODW web site at: [www.vdh.virginia.gov/odw/EmergencyPlanningTools.htm](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/odw/EmergencyPlanningTools.htm)

Copies can also be obtained from the ODW Field Office for your region on request.

<p><b>Throughout the year...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Study the ODW publication: <u>Boil Water Advisories During Hurricanes and Other Natural Disasters</u>. Download a copy from the ODW web site, or request a copy from your ODW Field Office.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep copies of the <u>Generic Boil Water Notice</u>, the <u>Generic Do Not Use Notice</u>, and the <u>Virginia Department of Health Boil Water Notices Brochure</u> on hand at all times.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide copies of <u>Virginia Department of Health Boil Water Notices Brochure</u> to new customers or billing units at the time service begins. Distribute copies of the brochure as an enclosure with annual Water Quality Reports (also known as Consumer Confidence Reports).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep phone and contact records for your customers up-to-date.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contact local television and radio stations to learn how to utilize their services to provide information to your customers during emergencies.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contact your local police or sheriff's department to find out if Reverse-911 calling is available in your area, and any special requirements for its use.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep a supply of masking tape on hand to tape copies of notices on the doors of customers who may have evacuated their homes during a natural disaster.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Throughout hurricane season (June 1 through November 30, annually)...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Monitor hurricane activity reported by local television and radio. Keep abreast of approaching storms by visiting the National Hurricane Center website at <a href="http://www.nhc.noaa.gov">www.nhc.noaa.gov</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Three days prior to a predicted hurricane strike...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Monitor water production and storage closely. Stored water can quickly become depleted as customers fill bathtubs or containers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Immediately after a natural disaster...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assess your waterworks for damage as soon as it is safe for you to do so.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If the storm has caused damage that could let contaminants enter the water supply, including power outages leading to loss of system pressure, service line breaks, or flooding, contact the ODW Field Office for guidance on issuing a boil water advisory to your customers.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If the waterworks has sustained damage, and it is not possible to contact the ODW Field Office because of interrupted telephone service, proceed with customer notification as soon as it is safe for you to do so, following the directions in the guide. Contact the ODW Field Office as soon as possible after phone service has been restored.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In the days following a natural disaster...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If the waterworks has sustained damage you should provide updates to the ODW Field Office regarding repair or recovery efforts whenever there is significant change in status. For example, if power was interrupted during the storm, provide an update when power is restored.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you have access to a fax machine, use the <u>ODW SitRep</u> form to provide your updates to the ODW Field Office, or use the form to gather information to discuss during your daily phone call to ODW staff.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow the guidelines provided by your ODW Field Office for disinfecting the well and collecting requested water quality samples.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you distributed a generic notice to your customers, follow up with additional notices specific to your situation as soon as you are able to do so.</li> </ul>
<p><b>When you are sure the water is again safe to use or drink...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> When the ODW Field Office agrees that the situation has been resolved, distribute a copy of the <u>Drinking Water Problem Corrected Notice</u> to your customers.</li> </ul>

