



DRINKING WATER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PDEQ is developing strategies to respond to the drinking water issues arising as a result of the catastrophic Aspen Fire on Mt. Lemmon. Below are a series of questions and answers related to drinking water and the fire.

Is my water safe to drink? No, unless you take the precautions described below. If you receive your drinking water from an Arizona Department of Environmental (ADEQ) regulated public water system, such as Mt. Lemmon Water Coop., Camp Lawton, Camp Whispering Pines, Southern Baptist Church Camp or Latter Day Saints Camp, it is advised that you boil your water or use bottled water for drinking and cooking, until ADEQ has issued an approval of the water for drinking. The residents will be notified when the water is safe for drinking. While you are waiting to receive notice that the water is safe to drink, you should boil the water you will be using for drinking and cooking for 3 to 5 minutes. When boiling is not practical, use common household liquid bleach for disinfecting the water. The bleach should have 5.25% hypochlorite listed as the active ingredient. Make sure the bleach is free of perfumes and added scents. Follow the disinfection instructions below before drinking or cooking with the water:

1. Use 2 drops of liquid bleach per quart of water. Double the amount if the water is cloudy or contains many floating particulates.
2. The disinfected water should have a slight chlorine odor; if not, add one more drop of liquid bleach.
3. Mix thoroughly and allow the water to stand for 30 minutes before using.

When will the water be safe to drink? If you receive your water from any of the public water systems listed above, ADEQ will be notifying the residents once inspections and sampling of the systems has been completed and the water system has been determined to be free of contaminants.

Is it OK for me to take a shower and flush my toilet before I receive notification from ADEQ? Yes, it is reasonably safe for you to take a shower, however, care should be taken to minimize ingesting water by mouth. You may flush your toilets with the water coming into your household before you have received the notification from ADEQ that your water is safe to drink. However, your septic system should be inspected first to ensure that it will accept the wastewater and is in good working condition.

Can I use the water in my house to wash dishes by hand or in the dishwasher before I hear from ADEQ that my water has been determined safe to drink? No, it is not advisable to wash dishes or other food utensils with the water coming into your house until you have received notification from ADEQ that your water is safe to drink. Any dishes or cooking utensils, which need to be washed, should be washed using bottled or boiled water.

Can my pet drink the water from the household before I hear from ADEQ that my water has been determined safe to drink? Yes. The amount of bacteria that can safely be consumed by a pet is much higher than it is for humans.

What if I get my drinking water from a private well that is not part of an ADEQ regulated public water system? If you have your own domestic well, which is used to supply drinking water to your household, and your property is located within an area burned by the Aspen fire, you should follow the advice contained in the ADEQ brochure entitled "PRIVATE DOMESTIC WELL OWNERS AFTER THE FIRE". This brochure is available by contacting any of the ADEQ offices at the following numbers: (602) 207-4617 or (602) 206-4464.