


Department of Health
Office of Drinking Water
Policy

Title:	Short-term Alternative Water Supplies	Number: F.11
References:	RCW 70.119A.060; Chapter 246-290 WAC; Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40, Section 141.101.	
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Approved By:		

Conclusion

Purveyors must provide a short-term alternative water supply when the system's water supply:

- Has acute chemical contamination present over the maximum contaminant level (MCL);
- Has chronic chemical contamination at a concentration considered acute by the department; or
- Is not capable of providing water to consumers.

A purveyor does not have to provide a short-term alternative water supply for coliform MCL violations or certain surface water treatment technique violations when a Boil Water Advisory is in place or where boiling water is feasible.

A short-term alternative water supply includes bottled water, trucked water, or a temporary intertie with a neighboring water system. The purveyor and the department will determine which option to implement for providing a short-term alternative supply.

Background and Analysis

RCW 70.119A.060(1)(b)(vi) requires purveyors of Group A water systems to, "Take whatever investigative or corrective action is necessary to assure that a safe and reliable drinking water supply is continuously available to users." A purveyor must provide the short-term alternative water supply to all customers who request it. The purveyor should provide a minimum of one-and-a-half (1.5) gallons of water per person per day for each customer.

Bottled Water: Bottled water must be produced by a Washington State Department of Agriculture-approved bottling operation or out-of-state or international bottler whose product meets Food and Drug Administration regulations (WAC 246-290-130(9)). The Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40, Section 141.101, prohibits public water systems from using bottled water to achieve compliance with an MCL.

Trucked Water: Water delivered by truck must meet drinking water standards, and:

- The water must come from an approved public water supply (WAC 246-290-130);
- The container must be contaminant free (WAC 246-290-220); and
- The truck and container must be maintained so water contamination is prevented. For specific guidance, refer to: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/331-063.pdf>

If a purveyor supplies trucked or bottled water as a short-term alternative water supply, the purveyor may provide potable water in one or more of the following ways:

- Establish a centrally located filling station where consumers can get water.
- Deliver bottled water directly to customers.
- Provide bottled water at a central location within the utility's service area where consumers can pick it up during regular business hours.
- Make arrangements with a local merchant to provide bottled water at no cost to consumers willing and able to travel to the retail location.

Use of bottled water and trucked water is not acceptable as a permanent water source. If the need for a short-term alternative water supply is expected to last more than one month, the purveyor will be expected to submit a plan to the department identifying the purveyor's approach and timeframe for resolving the problem until the system's permanent source is safe and reliable. This plan may or may not include entering into a bilateral compliance agreement.

Temporary Intertie: Any intertie must be from a source approved by the department (WAC 246-290-132).

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