

Regulatory Guidance in Response to Hurricane Alex and Tropical Depression 2 from the Executive Director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality: Drinking Water (for the General Public)

If you must respond to damage from Hurricane Alex, its remnants, or Tropical Depression 2, use this document to understand relevant environmental rules. This document is intended to help you decide a reasonable course of action to follow. If you have any questions, please contact your TCEQ regional office. For your convenience, the table below lists each county that was mentioned in Gov. Rick Perry's disaster proclamation for these storm events and the TCEQ regional office that serves that county.

In these counties:	Mail written notices to this TCEQ regional office:	Call or fax:
Maverick, Val Verde, Webb, Zapata	TCEQ Region 16 707 East Calton Rd. Ste. 304 Laredo TX 78041-3887	Phone: 956-791-6611 Fax: 956-791-6716
Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Starr, Willacy	TCEQ Region 15 1804 West Jefferson Ave. Harlingen TX 78550-5247	Phone: 956-425-6010 Fax: 956-412-5059
Jim Wells, Kleberg	TCEQ Region 14 NRC Bldg. Ste. 1200 6300 Ocean Dr. Unit 5839 Corpus Christi TX 78412-5839	Phone: 361-825-3100 Fax: 361-825-3101
Bexar	TCEQ Region 13 14250 Judson Rd. San Antonio TX 78233-4480	Phone: 210-490-3096 Fax: 210-545-4329
Brazoria	TCEQ Region 12 5425 Polk Ave. Ste. H Houston TX 77023-1452	Phone: 713-767-3500 Faxes: 713-767-3761 (Air) 713-767-3691 (Water) 713-767-3646 (Waste)
Cottle, Foard	TCEQ Region 3 1977 Industrial Blvd. Abilene TX 79602-7833	Phone: 325-698-9674 Fax: 325-692-5869
Floyd, Garza, Lamb, Lubbock, Lynn, Motley, Terry	TCEQ Region 2 5012 50th Street Suite 100 Lubbock TX 79414-3421	Phone: 806-796-7092 Fax: 806-796-7107

If you were affected by either of these storm events and your county does not appear in this table, find contact information for the regional office that serves you online at www.tceq.state.tx.us/goto/region.

Can I drink the water?

You should not drink the water if you don't know for sure it is safe. If you have a private well, you should [disinfect your well before you use it](#). If you receive water from a public water system, you should not use the water until the system lets you know the water is safe.

What is a Boil Water notice?

Public water systems issue Boil Water notices to let you know when the drinking water is not safe. The Boil Water notice will be put on radio, TV, and newspapers. If you don't know if a Boil Water notice is in effect for your public water system, contact them.

Q. How will I know when the Boil Water notice is over?

The public water system will issue a notice in the same way they issued the initial Boil Water notice. If you don't know if a Boil Water notice is still in effect for your public water system, call them.

Who is my public water system provider?

If you don't know who your water system provider is, you may want to look at an old water bill for the name and phone number. If you know the name of your system, you can find their contact information in the [TCEQ's Integrated Water Utility Database](#) or contact the TCEQ Water Supply Division at 512-239-4691.

I can't contact my public water system. What should I do?

If you can't contact your public water system, contact your county or city Office of Emergency Management. You may also contact TCEQ Consumer Assistance at 512-239-6100 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday or the TCEQ regional office that serves your county ([see list on page 1](#)).

Does the TCEQ have an after-hours hot line for customers to call if they have questions or concerns?

Yes, customers may call 888-777-3186.

Our public water system needs to figure out if the water is safe to drink. How is that done?

Many contaminants can affect the safety of drinking water. The most common concern after flooding or power outage events is bacteriological contamination. When bacteriological contamination is suspected, the drinking water is considered safe when there is enough disinfectant present to make sure that pathogens are controlled and system pressures are at least 20 psi. (Pathogens are the organisms that can cause illness.)

A system will need to take coliform samples representative of the distribution system after pressure has been restored. After ensuring that adequate pressure and chlorine levels have been restored, and after bacteriological monitoring shows the water is free of contamination, the Boil Water notice may be lifted and this precautionary measure may be discontinued.

How can the TCEQ help my public water system?

Assistance to public water systems is available from the Public Drinking Water Section at 512-239-4691 during working hours, 888-777-3186 during non-working hours, and through e-mail at pdws@tceq.state.tx.us.

Do I have to pay my water bill if I am out of water?

Your bill may be prorated. You should contact your utility for its billing policy.

When can a utility cut service off?

For nonpayment of bills or for an imminent health hazard.

The water system is down. Can I use water from my neighbor's private well?

Generally, no, but if you do, the water should be brought to a vigorous rolling boil, then boiled for two minutes and let it cool before using.

If you are involved in a hearing and are concerned about a scheduled hearing, what should you do?

Contact the TCEQ staff person assigned to the case or SOAH.

When can I expect my water to be drinkable again?

In some cases it may take some time for power to be restored and the water system repaired and disinfected. You should continue to boil water until notified by your utility.

Is it safe to use my on-site septic system?

If your system is malfunctioning, contact the designated representative. If you do not know who the designated representative is, contact the TCEQ regional office that serves your county ([see list on page 1](#)). If you can't reach our regional office, call our Compliance Support Division at 512-239-6300.

How should I dispose of any household hazardous waste that is generated as a result of this storm?

Any household hazardous waste generated as a result of this storm must be separated from other storm-generated waste and disposed of at a permitted hazardous waste facility or during a local household hazardous waste collection event. Local governments, along with the TCEQ, usually conduct these events after hurricanes and other catastrophes. Be alert to learn of events scheduled in your area, or you may contact your local county offices or the TCEQ for more information.

Web Addresses Mentioned in This Document

Disinfecting your private well: <www.tceq.state.tx.us/goto/safewell>.

Find the TCEQ regional office that serves you: <www.tceq.state.tx.us/goto/region>

TCEQ Integrated Water Utilities Database: <www10.tceq.state.tx.us/iwud/>