

From the Tap...

Being Prepared

Disasters can happen without warning. They often require immediate action and leave little time for response. Here are four simple steps to help you and your family prepare:

Step 1—Research

Contact the local chapter of the American Red Cross to understand what types of disasters are most likely to occur in your area.
<http://www.redcrossdc.org>

Step 2—Plan

Create a Disaster Plan for your household.

Discuss with the entire family why the plan is important.

Pick a place to meet or a person to call should the family become separated.

Discuss what to do in an evacuation.

Step 3—Prepare

Prepare a Disaster Supplies Kit.

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your family's needs for at least three days.

Include food, water, first aid supplies, clothing, flashlight, battery-powered radio, extra batteries, necessary medications, any special items for infants or the elderly.

Step 4—Practice

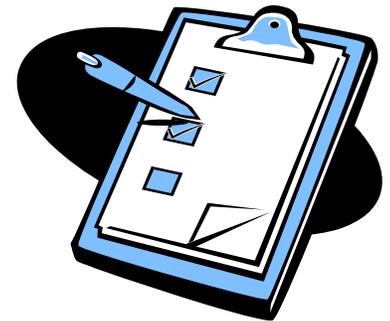
Practice, maintain, and update the plan.

Quiz your children on different aspects of the plan.

Conduct emergency evacuations.

Replace stored water and food items at least every six months.

Test and recharge fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, flashlights and radio batteries.



Inside this issue:

Rate Increase Effective April 1, 2005

Possible Temporary Taste Change

Tips for Being Prepared

Continued on page 2

Annual Water Main Flushing



Each spring, April thru June, Fairfax Water flushes its water mains by opening fire hydrants and allowing them to flow freely for a short period of time. The flushing cleans out sediment and allows routine maintenance of

the nearly 22,000 fire hydrants in the Fairfax County service area. Flushing of the mains normally occurs at night between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. Flushing may result in some discoloration and the presence of sediment

in your water. These conditions are not harmful and should be of short duration. We appreciate your tolerance of this inconvenience.

Rate Increase Effective April 1, 2005

The revised Schedule of Rates, Fees and Charges will be effective with meter readings taken on or after April 1, 2005. The revision includes increases in the Water Usage (Commodity) Charge (from \$1.40 to \$1.45 per 1,000 gallons) and the Peak Use Charge (from \$2.60 to \$2.65 per 1,000 gallons). Increases in Availability, Local Facilities, Turn On/Off, Returned Check and Fire Hydrant Use charges have also been approved. A description of these charges can be found on the back of your water bill or at www.fairfaxwater.org.

The increase in the Water Usage Charge will increase the average water bill by approximately \$5.00 per year.

Chlorine Taste and Odor



You may notice a chlorine taste and odor in your drinking water this spring. It is the result of a routine change in the form of chlorine used in the treatment process. During the annual water main flushing program, Fairfax Water uses free chlorine, which has a stronger odor, instead of

combined chlorine (also called chloramines). Free chlorine is a more powerful disinfectant than combined chlorine. It is not harmful, and it is used to ensure that the over 3,100 miles of water mains that deliver your drinking water are free of harmful bacteria.

Editor's Note

If you have any comments or suggestions about this publication, let us hear from you.

E-mail us at jbailey@fairfaxwater.org or write us at the address below. If you have questions regarding water service, please call Customer Service at (703) 698-5800.

All other departments call (703) 698-5600; After-hours emergency call (703) 698-5613, TTY (703) 698-7025.

Fairfax Water
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www.fairfaxwater.org

Being Prepared Continued from page 1

Resources

There are a number of resources available to help you prepare for an emergency. We have included some of them below.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

<http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>

American Red Cross

http://www.redcrossdc.org/Disaster/disaster_information_guides.php3

Northern Virginia Regional Commission

<http://www.novaregion.org/emergency.htm>

Tips for Preparing your Home and Family

There are six basic categories of preparedness:

1. Water
2. Food
3. First Aid Supplies
4. Clothing and Bedding
5. Tools and Emergency Supplies
6. Special Items for Medical Conditions