



RETURNING HOME SAFELY AFTER A WILDFIRE

Keep yourself safe and healthy with
these simple checklists

JULY 2026

Government of
Northwest Territories



BEFORE RETURNING HOME

Prepare yourself

Returning home after a wildfire may be stressful and traumatic. This guide will help you know what to do and where to get help. To prepare yourself and your family emotionally before returning home, think about what you will see, hear and smell. Your community may have changed dramatically. Some things to be prepared for:

- burnt landscapes and trees;
- burnt buildings and vehicles;
- smell of smoke; and
- areas covered in ash and soot.

Do not return home until the community government announces it is safe to return!

Initial damage assessment

Your community government will have conducted an initial damage assessment of the entire community before your return to ensure it is safe.

- ☐ Seek guidance from your community government about any significant structural damage or hazardous conditions.
- ☐ You may wish to undertake atmospheric testing. It is recommended in all buildings affected by fire, where hazardous gas vapours and particulates may be present. This will help you know if your home is safe for occupancy.
- ☐ Check with your community government and/or local utility providers to determine whether power, gas, water and sewage services are working.
- ☐ Remember to confirm that tap water is safe to drink and that there are no boil water advisories in place. If your drinking water is from a private well, have it tested if you can. Run your taps for five minutes to move stagnant water out of your lines.
- ☐ Check with your community government about core services, collection or disposal of damaged items, and any changes to routine garbage collection services.
- ☐ Think about the following:



- Do you have fuel, food, and water? There may be limited amounts available to you in your community.
- Are your cell phones charged? There may be interruptions or lack of electricity in your community.
- Do you have a radio, a flashlight, and an emergency kit?
- Do you have the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)? You may not be able to get this in your community.
- Do you and your returning family members have your tetanus boosters and other vaccinations up to date?
- Do you have all the medications that you will need?
- Will you take your children and pets on the first visit?

Here is a list of recommended items that will help you during the recovery process:

- camera or video camera;
- notebook and pen to record damage;
- buckets, mops and sponges;
- all-purpose cleaner or unscented detergent;
- flashlight;
- first aid kit;
- tools (hammer, pliers);
- trash bags;
- PPE (gloves, respiratory protection, proper clothing and shoes, etc.); and
- food and drinking water (recommended 4L per person per day).

RETURNING HOME

Use caution when coming back into your community and as you enter your property. Hazards like the following may be present when returning after wildfire:

- slip, trip and fall hazards from unstable structures, damaged trees, collapsing roofs, open pits, or wet and slippery surfaces;
- hot spots (which can still flare up);
- damaged or fallen power lines, poles, and downed wires;
- ash pits (holes in the ground that are hidden because they are filled with ash. They may still have hot embers);
- contamination (e.g. toxins such as heavy metals, fire retardant, and others);
- sharp objects such as nails, metal, concrete, or wood debris;
- ash, soot, and demolition dust;



- damaged or leaking household hazardous materials such as kitchen and bathroom cleaning products, paint, batteries, and fuel containers (Disposal tips are later in this document);
- small or poorly ventilated areas where carbon monoxide may be present from using pumps, generators, or pressure washers (As a general rule – DO NOT ENTER TIGHT SPACES);
- damaged or leaking pesticides or herbicide containers like ant or weed killer; and,
- damaged propane cylinders for heating or from a BBQ.

TAKE PICTURES

Documentation is key. Take photos of all damage before you start cleaning or throwing things away. Document the time you spend working on all recovery activities, as this information will be important for insurance.

CLEANING YOUR HOME

Wildfire smoke can irritate the skin, nose, throat, lungs, and eyes, and can cause coughing and wheezing. Lingering smoke and fire ash in your home and yard can temporarily worsen any personal respiratory issues.

- ☐ When entering a smoke-impacted building, take appropriate safety precautions and based on identified hazards, use the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). These are a few general PPE requirements that ensure your protection from cuts, scrapes, punctures, slips, and other hazards in post-fire environments:
 - respiratory protection (type based on atmospheric testing);
 - protective outer clothing (long sleeves and pants);
 - certified steel-toed boots;
 - hard hat;
 - safety goggles/glasses;
 - protective gloves for indoor items, as well as sturdy work gloves for cleaning and removing damaged items; and
 - hearing protection as required.
- ☐ Use appropriate equipment for all clean-up activities, including:
 - a tool, such as a shovel, to dislodge or move any debris; and
 - a first aid kit (including supplies to clean and cover any cut or wound before commencing clean-up).



- ☐ If there is no air quality advisory or demolition taking place in the area, get the air circulating inside your house by using a fan and opening your windows.
- ☐ Replace your furnace filter and/or air conditioner filter.
- ☐ Use a humidifier to reduce ash in the air.
- ☐ Consider having heating, ventilating, and air conditioning units and all ductwork professionally cleaned to remove soot, ash, and smoke residue. You can change filters when you first return home and then continue to replace them frequently.
- ☐ Wash all interior surfaces with white vinegar, a mild detergent or appropriate cleaning solution, and rinse thoroughly. Vinegar helps remove odour and residue from smoke damage. Do not use bleach, because it has harmful interaction with fire retardants that may have been used in the area.
- ☐ Wash clothing, linens and bedding to remove any potential ash.
- ☐ Disinfect and deodorize furniture and curtains or other fabric window treatments with spray-deodorizing products. Do not use odour-masking sprays as they only cover up the problem and do not fix it. You can also steam clean carpets, window coverings, upholstered furniture, and mattresses. Steam neutralizes the odour and carbon film left by wildfires.
- ☐ Take electronic equipment outside and “blow out” the components with an air hose or canned compressed air before using. Ash can cause static charges.
- ☐ Remove excess water. If your home was damaged by water from wildfire efforts, focus on preventing mould growth by reducing excess water. Before starting any work, ensure you have the proper PPE for dealing with water contaminants, like a mask and protective gloves.
 - To help prevent mould growth, clean any water-damaged or water-stained surfaces using warm water and soap.
 - Dry all wet items as soon as possible.
 - Dry wet or waterlogged carpet as quickly as possible and remove any underlay.
 - Steam clean carpets with a disinfectant.
 - Remove excess moisture from the air inside your home using a dehumidifier.
 - Let your insurance company and restoration contractor know as soon as possible if you find any visible mould or smell mould inside your home.



FRIDGE & FREEZER SAFETY

If your home was without power during the evacuation, assume most refrigerated and frozen food is unsafe unless you have evidence it stayed cold.

Step 1: Throw out unsafe food

- Discard any refrigerated or frozen food that thawed or was at room temperature for two or more hours.
- Discard food with unusual odours, colours, or signs of spoilage.
- Discard any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke, or soot. This includes foods like dry goods (i.e., flour, sugar, spices, etc.) even if the package isn't open.
 - Check jarred foods, including home-canned items, as heat from fire can compromise safety seals.
- Remember, food contaminated with harmful bacteria may look and smell normal.
- Food that still contains ice crystals or remains refrigerator-cold can be refrozen.

Step 2: Clean and sanitize your fridge and freezer

- Remove all food, shelves, drawers, and ice trays.
- Wash removable parts with hot water and detergent.
- Sanitize using:
 - **1 tablespoon unscented bleach per gallon (4.5 L) of water.**
- Wash the inside surfaces, doors, and seals (gaskets) with warm water and baking soda or mild soap.
- Rinse and sanitize with the bleach solution.
- Clean around hinges, locks, and hard-to-reach areas where spills may have collected.

Step 3: Air out the unit

- Leave doors open for at least several hours; if strong odours are present, leave open for one to two days.

Step 4: Remove lingering odours

If smells remain:

- Place baking soda, activated charcoal, or fresh coffee grounds inside for several days.
- Wipe interior surfaces with a 50/50 vinegar-water mixture.
- Crumpled newspaper placed inside the unit for several days can also help absorb odours.



Step 5: Check temperatures before restocking

- Fridge temperature should be **1–4°C**.
- Freezer temperature should be **-18°C or colder**.

Step 6: If the smell won't go away

- Persistent odours may indicate liquids have soaked into the appliance insulation.
- The unit may require professional repair or replacement if odours cannot be removed.

Disposing of fridge or freezer

- Follow all disposal instructions from community public works.
- Dispose of food in double-bagged garbage bags and securely tie the bags to reduce odour and chances of spilling.
- Secure fridge door shut with strong tape (duct tape or tuck tape) or strapping. If possible, lock door shut with a latch.

IF IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT

Seek guidance from your community government on how and where to dispose of your materials, food and other items if required. Throw out the following:

- Discard any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke or soot. This includes foods like dry goods (i.e. flour, sugar, spices, etc.) even if the package isn't open.
- Check jarred foods, including home-canned items, as heat from fires can compromise safety seals.
- Cleaning products, paint, batteries and damaged fuel containers may need to be disposed of properly to avoid risk.
- Some medications may be affected by heat, smoke and soot. Check with your doctor, health centre or pharmacy to find out if any of your medications need to be thrown out and how and where you can do that safely.



2026 DRINKING WATER SAFETY GUIDE

Following a community-wide wildfire evacuation, residents should take precautions before using water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and other household purposes. Fire, smoke, heat, power outages, and damage to water infrastructure can affect water quality and safety.

Watch for:

- updates from your community government and public health authority; and
- follow any Boil Water Advisory, Do Not Consume, or Do Not Use notices.

CONSIDER: Cleaning your household water tank

- It is recommended that household water tanks be cleaned annually.
- Step-by step instructions for how to clean your water tank are attached and are available online at the link below and will be available at the back of this booklet
- Full Link:
https://www.maca.gov.nt.ca/sites/maca/files/resources/18508_gnwt_hss_water_tank_cleaning_infosheet_14x8.5_24aug27_0.pdf

Inspect your property and piping system

Before using water:

- Check for damaged water pipes, plumbing fixtures, hot-water tank, and household tank (if applicable) for any leaks.
- Look for signs of fire damage near service connections.
- Inspect visible water lines, fixtures, and appliances for leaks or damage.
- Ensure all faucets, toilets, and water-using appliances are in good condition.
- If any plumbing repairs are required, contact a qualified plumber before using the water system.

Replace filters and clean appliances

- **Inspect and change water filters.** Throw away and replace all water filtration cartridges in your home (e.g., under-sink filters, whole-home filters, and fridge water/ice dispensers).
- **Flush water heaters.** Turn off the power/gas to your hot water tank, drain it, and flush it through until the water runs completely clear, then refill it.
- **Sanitize ice makers.** Clean and sanitize ice makers and discard the first few batches of ice produced by your appliance once fresh water is flowing.



For households on trucked water delivery

Drinking water stored in a tank can gradually lose its chlorine residual over time, which protects against bacteria and other harmful pathogens. This can make your water unsafe for consumption.

Step 1: Request fresh drinking water delivery

- While waiting for delivery, do not use water for food or drinking purposes.

Step 2: Flush household plumbing

- Open all cold and hot water taps in your home.
- Let them run continuously for at least five minutes to purge old standing water and flush out any build-up.
- Turn off the cold water and continue to run hot water taps until fresh water circulates through.
- The water may be used for household cleaning, laundry and other general purposes.
- As a precaution, boil tap water for one minute (rolling boil) before drinking, consuming or using for food until you receive a fresh tank of water. Use alternative water for consumption, such as bottled water or filtered water. If you have a boil water advisory, you must still flush your system to clear out the stagnant water.

For households on piped water

Step 1: Flush the household plumbing system

Even if the tank had clean water, stagnant water and heat can lead to bacteria growth.

- Ensure there is enough water in the treated water tank.
- Open all cold and hot water taps in your home.
- Let them run continuously for at least five minutes to purge old standing water and flush out any contaminants.
- Turn off cold water and continue to run hot water taps until fresh water circulates through.
 - Alternatively, see the “Replace filters and clean appliances” section.
- If you have a boil water advisory, you must still flush your system to clear out the stagnant water.

If you experience low pressure, leaks, discoloured water or have other concerns, please contact your community government.



ENTERING AND CLEANING YOUR YARD

Before you begin

Remember to visually check the stability of the trees around your property. Look for damage on the tree trunk or for visible damage to burned tree roots. Any trees that have been damaged by fire may soon become another hazard. They will need to be cut down and removed. It is recommended that you look online for tips on the steps to take in dealing with danger trees.

Stay away from damaged or fallen power lines and power poles. Contact your power provider if you notice damaged power lines/poles on or near your property. Wear appropriate PPE.

- ☐ Wet down any remaining fire debris to minimize health impacts from breathing in soot and ash left by the aftermath of this fire. Do not wash the fire debris into the street.
- ☐ Use a hose, sprayer or pressure washer on the exterior of your home, driveways, walkways, vehicles, patios, decks and outdoor furniture.
- ☐ Rinse off air intakes and air conditioners. Be sure NOT to use air hoses or leaf blowers — you do not want to drive more debris or particles into your home. (Be careful of carbon monoxide when using pumps, pressure washers or generators in enclosed spaces).
- ☐ Attic insulation can retain smoke odours, so, if impacted, you may wish to consider replacing it.

Chemicals and heavy metals

Your yard and surrounding areas may be impacted by fire, ash and soot. These materials contain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) and heavy metals. Wear appropriate PPE.

- ☐ Avoid direct contact with ash. If you get ash on your skin, in your eyes, or in your mouth, wash it off as soon as you can.
- ☐ Wet down remaining fire debris.
- ☐ Scrape up fire ash and soot remaining on your property as much as possible, place it in plastic bags or other containers that will prevent it from being disturbed.
- ☐ Consider adding new, clean soil to gardens if the area was impacted by fire or wildfire suppression activities.
- ☐ For children's play areas and equipment: clear away any debris and ensure water that may have been used in the fire is gone. If there is fire or structural damage to play equipment, consider blocking access to the area until play equipment is repaired or replaced. Use mild detergent and



clean water to wash children's outside toys, play equipment, and recreational equipment. If you suspect or know a sandbox was impacted by fire or firefighting materials, the sand should be replaced.

Fire retardants and residue

Retardant is used to slow or stop fire spread and may still be visible on natural surfaces, structures, and vehicles even after re-entry begins. Residents should not attempt to remove retardant from steep, rocky, or unstable slopes where cleaning could create fall hazards or destabilize soil — those areas should be left for trained crews.

If your home was sprayed or impacted by fire retardant, it needs to be removed from the outside siding and roof of your house, your vehicles, and any outside furniture, structures, etc., before you move back home. We've listed some frequently asked questions about wildland fire retardant and its use in the Northwest Territories below.

How will I know if retardant has been used on my property?

Long-term retardant (LC95A) will appear red within the first 12 hours of application, but will fade to orange after 24 hours, and continue to fade with time. Short-term retardant (WD881C) appears as a white foam on initial application and dissipates as the water evaporates from the foam.

Is the retardant that is used by the Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) hazardous?

The long-term retardant (LC95A) product NWT Fire uses has a human health hazard rating of 0 (as per Section 16 of the Safety Data Sheet, in concentrate form/unmixed with water). Short-term retardant has a health hazard rating of 2 (as per Section 16 of the Safety Data Sheet, in concentrate form/unmixed with water). If there is contact with skin or eyes, irritation may occur. Rinse with plenty of water. Note: Retardants are NEVER applied in concentrate form.

For more information on the materials, see the Safety Data Sheet information:

Long-term retardant SDS:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/fire/wfcs/products/msds/retard/phoschek/SDS_PC_LC95A-R.pdf

Short-term retardant SDS:

<https://www.perimeter-solutions.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/PHOS-CHEK-WD881-EN-OSHA-WHMIS-GHS-SDS-2020-06-18.pdf>

How do I clean retardant?

Retardants can be cleaned from surfaces using water. Dried retardants may take a bit longer to remove as they rehydrate upon contact with water. Clean up may take more than one pass. Using a pressure



washer to clean is not recommended as it may push retardant into cracks or neighbouring properties. Do not use bleach on retardant residues. If skin contact occurs, wash using soap and water.

Considerations

Although retardants are designed to be low-hazard when mixed and applied, **direct contact with dried residue can still cause skin and eye irritation**. Residents should wear gloves, long sleeves, and eye protection while cleaning.

- People with respiratory conditions should avoid creating spray or mist when cleaning. Working upwind is recommended when rinsing large areas, as droplets and loosened dust can briefly increase exposure.

Vegetable gardens, children's play areas, and pet zones that received retardant should be thoroughly rinsed and, where heavy deposits occurred or remain, topsoil may be removed or replaced before planting or continuing play or garden use.

- Keep children and pets away from visibly contaminated areas until cleaning is complete.
- Avoid washing large volumes of retardant directly into surface water, or streams, and instead collect and dispose of rinse water/solids where practical, in line with local guidelines.

If in doubt, ask. Contact your local health or environmental authorities if you are unsure about how to deal with extensive retardant contamination, especially on complex surfaces or around food production areas. If you see areas where there are significant quantities of retardant in waterbodies, wells, or critical habitat, please contact your community government or the regional ECC office.



TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AND OTHERS

On top of risks to your physical health, traumatic events like emergencies and natural disasters can have a big impact on your mental health. Coping with the stress and emotions you've felt during the disaster, and in the days, weeks and months that follow, can be challenging.

SEEK HELP

If you or someone in your family are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, there are supports and resources available to help you through.

- **811:** Call to speak to a nurse for non-urgent, confidential advice and support for health or mental wellness needs. Available 24/7.

If you are having thoughts of self-harm, please seek medical attention immediately, including calling 911.

DO SMALL THINGS TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- eat nutritious food;
- stay hydrated;
- try to rest often and listen to your body's need for sleep;
- pace yourself on your clean-up activities, and take regular breaks; and
- prioritize tasks, and don't pressure yourself to tackle it all at once.

LOOK OUT FOR YOURSELF, AND OTHERS, NOW AND OVER THE LONG-TERM

The signs of stress related to a traumatic event do not always appear immediately during or after the event. Signs of trauma, and difficulty coping, may show up now, or in the weeks, months, and sometimes years ahead. Watch for these signs, and remember to seek help for yourself and your loved ones:

- feeling worried or frustrated more than usual;
- feeling hopeless;
- thinking about the disaster or traumatic event all the time;
- having flashbacks to the event;
- experiencing changes in your sleep pattern;
- experiencing changes in appetite (eating more or less than usual);
- avoiding people or activities that you usually enjoy; and
- using alcohol or drugs more.



DESTROYED OR MISSING DOCUMENTS

Be careful: do not attempt to open a safe until the outside is cool to the touch.

ITEM DESTROYED OR MISSING	WHO TO CONTACT FOR REPLACEMENT
Animal registration papers	Community government offices
Bank Books	Bank Branch
Birth certificates – Marriage certificates – Death certificates	Vital Statistics GNWT Department of Health and Social Services
Bonds (completely destroyed)	Write to: Canada Savings Bonds PO Box 2770, Station D Ottawa ON K1P 1J7 Include names and addresses that appeared on bonds, approximate date when purchased, and denominations. Gather all pieces and ashes and keep them for further reference.
Bonds (partially destroyed)	Gather up remaining pieces and ashes, put them in a package and write a letter explaining what happened. Send to Canada Savings Bond address (above)
Children's Services and Social Assistance identification cards, medical assistance, or social assistance cheques	Your case worker
Immigration documents	Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada
Credit Cards	Issuing credit card company
Divorce papers	Supreme Court where decree was filed or divorce lawyer
Drivers licences and vehicle registration title cards	GNWT Department of Infrastructure
Income tax records	Revenue Canada
Insurance policies	Insurance agent
Land titles	GNWT Lands Titles Office
Medical records	Health centre, family doctor, or specialist
Military discharge papers	Veteran Affairs Canada
Money (partially or completely destroyed)	Nearest Bank of Canada branch (check with your bank on locations)
Passports	Service Canada for Canadians / Your Consulate General for non-residents
Territorial Health Care card	GNWT Department of Health and Social Services
Social Insurance Number (SIN) cards – Canada Pension Plan documents, Employment Insurance documents	Service Canada
Stocks	Issuing company or lawyer
Titles and deeds	Local municipal office
Wills	Family lawyer or estate lawyer

HOW TO CLEAN YOUR WATER STORAGE TANK

Step by step instructions for cleaning
and disinfecting your water storage tank

WHY DO I NEED TO CLEAN MY WATER STORAGE TANKS?

Regular maintenance of your water storage tank involves draining, cleaning and disinfecting it, this will help to keep the stored water safe to drink. All water contains some solids. Even if you can't see it in your glass, it can build up over time in your water tank. This maintenance will remove sediment, algae, microbial growth, and debris from your water tank.

Regular cleaning also makes water look and taste better. It is a homeowner's responsibility to make sure that their water tank is cleaned and disinfected at least once per year and as needed.

HOW DO I KNOW THAT MY WATER STORAGE TANK NEEDS TO BE CLEANED?

The drinking water that comes from a water delivery truck or piped system is treated and safe. If the water comes out of the tap cloudy or if the water in your glass is not clear after one minute, your storage tank may need to be drained, cleaned, and disinfected.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD MY WATER STORAGE TANK BE CLEANED?

Water storage tanks should be drained, cleaned and disinfected at least once per year. In communities where the water supply has high levels of sediment at certain times of the year, storage tanks may need to be cleaned more often. In general, if your household water tastes, looks or smells unusual, you should clean your storage tank and/or your water heater.



Things you will need for cleaning your tank:



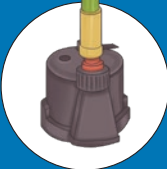
Unscented
household bleach



Water delivery
and pump out



Pressure washer
with storage tank



Sump Pump
(optional)



Mop



Wet/Dry Vacuum

Personal Protective Equipment



Protective
glasses



N95 Mask



Gloves



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Environmental_Health@gov.nt.ca
867-767-9066 ext 49262

HOW TO CLEAN YOUR WATER STORAGE TANK

Read all the steps before starting the cleaning process.

STEP 1: PREP

- Start the process when the tank is near empty and co-ordinate with the water delivery and sewage pump out service to refill your water storage tank and pump out your sewage tank.

You will need two water fills: once during the tank cleaning process and again at the end.

- Once you start cleaning the tank, you will not have any water for 24 hours. Have a reserve of drinking water or set aside a reserve of water from your tank to use for brushing teeth, cooking, etc.
- Put up signs at all the taps and faucets to let your family know that the water is NOT safe for drinking.
- Change into your work clothing and put on your personal protective equipment (PPE) - protective glasses, N95 mask, and gloves.
- Clear the top of the tank for a clean workspace.



- Make a disinfectant solution by mixing 1 part unscented household bleach with 4 parts warm (not hot) water in a clean bucket e.g. 1 cup bleach and 4 cups water.
- Clean and disinfect all tools that will touch the water or inside of the tank, including the hose of the wet/dry vacuum, the nozzle of the pressure washer, etc.:
 - Wash all tools with hot water and dish detergent.
 - Rinse with water.
 - Disinfect by spraying the disinfectant solution on the tools or by dipping the tools in the disinfectant solution.
 - Let tools air dry on a clean towel or paper towel.
- Collect 2-5 gallons of hot water in water storage container(s) or pail(s). Set aside, this water will be used for cleaning and rinsing the tank. If you are using a pressure washer, fill the storage container of the pressure washer with hot water.

STEP 2: DRAIN



- Drain the tank by turning on all the taps and letting the water run.



Caution: Listen to the water pump. When the tank is close to empty the pump will run without stopping. Be careful not to let the pump run at zero flow as it will burn the motor out.

- Turn off the water pump and faucets when the tank is close to empty. Close any valves to stop water from circulating in the pipes throughout the building.
- Use the sump pump to finish draining the tank if there is still a lot of water in it.



Do not enter the tank unless you are confined space entry trained, are certified to do so, and have all of the appropriate safety gear available.

STEP 3: CLEAN



- Use the pressure washer or stiff brush to clean any slime, grime and built-up dirt and sediment from the inside of the tank.
- Use the sump pump and/or wet/dry vacuum to remove the water and any bottom sludge or debris from the inside of the tank.

STEP 4: RINSE



- Rinse the inside of the tank well with clean water.
- Use the wet/dry vacuum to remove the rinse water from the tank.
- Repeat rinsing and draining as often as needed to remove any build up.
- Use the mop as needed to clean up any water spills to keep the area free of slipping hazards.

STEP 5: REFILL AND DISINFECT



- Coordinate with your drinking water delivery service to have your tank filled with potable water. Coordinate with them to have your tank filled again the next day once you have finished the disinfection step.
- During this step, any water treatment devices (including the hot water heater) should be bypassed to avoid harming the equipment/material.
- Disinfect by shock chlorination: Add about 4 cups of unscented liquid household bleach (5% chlorine) for every 900 L (200 Gal)

to make a 50 mg/L chlorine solution. To ensure good mixing, it is recommended that the bleach be added to the water when the storage tank is being filled.

To properly disinfect, or “shock chlorinate”, the tank and plumbing lines, there needs to be at least 10 mg/L free chlorine residual after the full 12-24 hour contact time. You should still be able to smell the bleach at the end of the contact time.



- Once the tank is full, open all taps and faucets connected to the plumbing system and the tank until you can smell bleach.
- Close/turn off all the taps and faucets.

STEP 7: WAIT

- The chlorinated water should be allowed to remain in the plumbing system for up to 24 hours, but no less than 12 hours.
- Make sure the “do not drink” signs are on all the taps and faucets.
- Use bottled water or water set aside during the PREP step to drink, brush your teeth, wash your face and cook with.

STEP 8: DRAIN AND REFILL

- Drain the tank by turning on all the taps and letting the water run. If you have a septic field, use a hose to by-pass the septic system and drain the water outside away from vegetation, lakes, or other areas that may be damaged by the chlorine solution.



Caution: Be careful not to let the pump run at zero flow as it will burn the motor out.

- Turn off the water pump and faucets when the tank is near empty.
- Coordinate with your drinking water delivery service to have your tank filled with potable water.

STEP 9: PURGE

- Turn on all the water taps and faucets and let the water run until you do not smell any bleach. This may take 2 to 5 minutes.

STEP 10: USE

- Your tank and pipes are now clean and disinfected, and you can now use your water.