



# Small Water Systems: Responding to Loss of Pressure Events

Maine CDC Drinking Water Program • 11 SHS Augusta, ME 04330 • 287-2070 • www.medwp.com

*This document is aimed at helping small public water systems, such as restaurants, schools, and mobile home parks respond appropriately to a loss of pressure event in their water system, while protecting the safety of their consumers.*

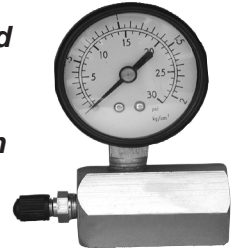
## Positive Pressure Keeps Contamination Out of Your Water System

If your water system loses pressure, contamination can enter your water system, putting consumers at risk. Prompt action, including disinfection, flushing, customer notification, and possibly a Boil Water Order will ensure water served will be safe to drink.

### Pressure loss can occur when:

- Well pumps fail or malfunction
- Power outages last long enough to deplete storage
- Water system undergoes significant repairs
- Water lines break or leak

**Pressure loss can be defined as very low or no pressure within the water system, often resulting in no water in parts or all of the system.**



## What Do I Do If My Water System Loses Pressure?

**Every situation is unique – as circumstances differ between pressure loss events, the order of the corrective actions outlined below may vary.**

**1. Notify your customers** – If you cannot adequately flush and disinfect your water system after water pressure is restored, you must institute a Boil Water Order and notify your consumers as soon as possible<sup>1</sup>. You should also notify your customers if they will be receiving highly chlorinated water.

**2. Disinfection** – Add an appropriate amount of chlorine bleach to your well and/or storage tank<sup>2</sup>. Ensure that a chlorine residual is present at each tap within the distribution system. Chlorine may be added before or after pressure is restored.

**3. Flushing** – After water service is restored flush the system to remove contamination such as sediment and other materials and/or to remove highly chlorinated water. Depending upon the situation, flushing can occur before or after the disinfection step.

**4. Test your water** – After disinfecting and flushing your water system, collect an Operations & Maintenance (O&M) total coliform bacteria sample. If the sample is positive for total coliform, repeat the disinfection and flushing procedure. If the sample is positive for *E. coli*, immediately issue a Boil Water Order and notify the Drinking Water Program at 287-2070.



**As the owner or operator of a public water system, you are responsible for the quantity and quality of the water served. If you are unsure about the safety of the water, a Boil Water Order can reduce the risk of exposure to your customers. Contact the Drinking Water Program if you are unsure of the steps you should take after a pressure loss event at your water system.**

## When Do I Issue a Boil Water Order?

- If you cannot adequately flush and disinfect your water system
- If any water samples are positive for *E. coli*
- If there is a broken sewer line adjacent to a broken water line

**When one of these criteria are met, you must institute a Boil Water Order, notify your consumers as soon as possible and contact the Drinking Water Program at 287-2070.**

1. Notification shall be made using the DWP approved Boil Water Order Notice which can be found on the DWP website at www.medwp.com or by calling 287-2070 or after hours at 557-4214. The notice must be distributed to the consumer either by hand, posting in a common area, or as an announcement on radio or TV.

2. Guidance on the proper procedure for shock chlorinating and flushing water systems can be found on the DWP website at www.medwp.com or by calling the DWP at 287-2070. Some treatment systems may be adversely impacted by high levels of chlorine. Consult with your treatment vendor before disinfecting.

