



SHERIFF KOOTENAI COUNTY



SHERIFF **BEN WOLFINGER**

UNDERSHERIFF **DAN MATTOS**

Media Release After the Flood: Drinking Water Contamination March 23, 2017

Kootenai County, Idaho: The Kootenai County Sheriff's Office, in conjunction with the Kootenai County Office of Emergency Management, are reminding residents of the potential hazards that exist with drinking water after a flood.

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality warns that drinking water can be compromised during extensive flooding. Even though your well may not have undergone severe flooding, you cannot take it for granted that your water is safe. Under flood conditions, contaminated surface water may enter directly into your underground water source bypassing the natural filtering process.

After flood waters recede, check your water supply to see if any of the following conditions exist:

- Has there been a change in water quality (e.g., odor, color or taste)?
- Is your water source in close proximity to flooded areas?
- Was your well actually flooded?

If your particular situation meets any of the above criteria and you think that your drinking water is of questionable quality, take the following steps:

- Stop using the well water for human consumption. Use only bottled or boiled water as an alternative source for drinking, cooking, and washing.
- Have your well tested for coliform bacteria. If tests show contamination, then your well should be disinfected.

For specific information regarding emergency disinfection of drinking water including, boiling, using liquid bleach, and chlorine or iodine tablets, please contact the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality their website www.deq.idaho.org or by calling 208-769-1422. For additional information / assistance you may also contact The Panhandle Health District at 208-415-5100 and their website: panhandlehealthdistrict.org

Additionally, if flooding has occurred, homes in your area may have damaged or failing sewage systems. Sewage systems should be checked, as they can lead to unfiltered sewage material entering nearby drinking water supplies. This is due to the ground being over saturated, thus not allowing soil to filter properly. Do not use your septic system if flood water is standing on the drain field.

Ben Wolfinger, Sheriff
By: Det. Dennis Stinebaugh