



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CITY OF ALAMOSA UNDER RED ALERT NOTIFICATION; GOOD PROGRESS BEING MADE

Alamosa, CO – Public safety officials say they're making good progress as the City of Alamosa continues to treat the city's water distribution system for bacterial contamination. The water distribution system is being disinfected with chlorine in a multi-stage process, with color-coded safety notices delivered to individual residences at the beginning of each stage.

Stage 1 notification operations began at 9 a.m. Tuesday and were completed throughout the city by 7:30 p.m. Wednesday. Upon receiving the notice, residents and businesses have been instructed not to use the city water for any purpose other than flushing toilets. In Stage 1, citizens may experience skin, eye, or other irritation from exposure to the highly concentrated chlorinated water. If signs of irritation occur, immediately rinse irritated areas with bottled water. If the irritation continues or spreads, contact your health care provider for follow-up care.

The Denver Salvation Army announced today it is providing non-water essentials to the citizens of Alamosa in the form of vouchers for paper products such as paper plates, cups and plasticware, which will allow residents to conserve some of their water for basic needs and not use it for washing dishes. The vouchers will be distributed at the La Gente (Hen-tay) Center, 2261 Enterprise Drive from 2 to 4 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and 1 to 3 p.m. Fridays through April 10. Residents will need to provide proof of Alamosa residency or an Alamosa utility bill. Both the City Market and Safeway stores in Alamosa are accepting the vouchers. Residents can call Salvation Army representatives at 1-719-587-5404 for more specific details.

Also today, the Comfort Inn on the west side of town announced it would begin offering free showers for residents from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily until the city water has been cleared for bathing. The motel is on its own well water and has not been impacted by the contamination. Residents are asked to bring their own towels and toiletries.

(more)

Add 1/March 27 Alamosa Update

Residents will be soon be notified when a Stage 2 “yellow” safety notice is activated, indicating the concentration of chlorine in the city has decreased. Water use will continue to be limited during Stage 2.

More than 100 volunteers were on scene yesterday, joining teams from the National Guard, the Alamosa Police Department, Alamosa Volunteer Fire Department, and other emergency crews as they “painted the town red” with the Stage 1 flyers.

With Stage 1 now underway, Mayor Farris Bervig says community members can now begin to “see some light at the end of the tunnel” as efforts continue round the clock to return to a safe water system.

In the meantime, water distribution centers are continuing to be operated in three locations: at the old Kmart building, Boyd Park and San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center. The centers are open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The community is being commended for transitioning from bottled water to bulk water as requested by public safety officials. Of the 12,000 gallons distributed Wednesday, officials say 69 percent of the water was in bulk, compared to 52 percent bulk the day before. A collection site for recycling of plastic bottles has been established at the old Kmart site with additional locations to be announced soon.

Crews will continue working today on the chlorine treatment with assistance from Denver Water, Aurora Water and other water experts.

According to public health officials, 60 to 65 percent of the restaurants in the city remain open and are working closely with Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Consumer Protection Division to maintain safe restaurant practices.

Public health officials are also working to determine the cause of the salmonella outbreak. During an update to the Alamosa City Council Wednesday evening, Robin Koons, Emergency Response Coordinator for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, described three possible theories: 1) possible cross contamination in the system; 2) a potential crack in a line that allowed for a contamination to enter when low pressure occurred; or 3) a potential contamination of a water storage site.

Also today, a new state incident management team from Northwest Colorado will be relieving a team from Jefferson County which has been helping with the incident since Saturday.

Community members interesting in volunteering should contact the Red Cross at 1-719-587-3314.

For more information, please call the CO-Help line at 1-877-462-2911, visit www.CityofAlamosa.org or watch Cable Channel 10.

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