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THURSTON COUNTY
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**PUBLIC HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

Household Plumbing:

**What to do after a Hazardous Algal Bloom (HAB)
Drinking Water Advisory has been lifted**

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Director

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1. Run all hot water taps for 15 minutes

Turning on the all of the hot water taps in your house including bathroom sinks, kitchen sinks and bathtubs. Leave them on for 15 minutes. This drains the hot water tank and clears hot water lines of any water that may be unsafe.

2. Run all cold water taps for 5 minutes

After you turn off the hot water taps, turn on all cold water taps and leave them on for 5 minutes. Flush all toilets at least once.

3. Change all water filters in the house

Change water filters including the one on your refrigerator if you have an ice maker/water dispenser.

a. Household water filters usually fall into two basic categories:

- Pressure filters - can be backwashed to clean. If your home has a pressure filter that can be backwashed, you should run a manual backwash of the filter before starting to flush out the hot and cold taps.
- Cartridge filters - have a replaceable element or cartridge. If you have a whole house cartridge filter system, you should replace the cartridges after flushing the hot and cold taps.

b. Point of use filters/treatment

If you have or use Point of Use filters, which are typically attached to your kitchen faucet you should replace the filter before using the faucet-connected unit.

c. Reverse Osmosis:

Reverse Osmosis drinking water treatment often have pre-filters, which you may want to replace before flushing the RO System. However the actual Reverse Osmosis membrane module should not require replacement. If the manufacturer of the membrane suggests that you replace this part of the system you should ask them to give you the specific reasons why.

4. Flush ALL remaining faucets and plumbed in appliances (such as dishwashers and washing machines).

Open any remaining fixtures such as hose bibs, external faucets or fixtures not used for drinking for at least five minutes to finish the plumbing system flushing.

This includes:

- Dishwashers
- Furnace Humidifiers
- Drinking fountains
- Refrigerator Ice makers/water dispensers - If you have an ice maker and/or water dispenser in your refrigerator:
 - a. Throw away all ice.
 - b. After you have run water through the hot and cold water taps, change the water filter.
 - c. Run water through the dispenser for 5 minutes.
 - d. Allow the ice maker to make several batches of ice. Throw out this ice and clean the ice container.
- *Water Softeners – A household water softener, which uses a natural or synthetic resin material to exchange sodium for calcium and magnesium present in the water, should be manually regenerated before flushing your plumbing system. This will ensure that the softener resin has been backwashed and cleaned before flushing procedures begin. If you are unsure of how to manually initiate a regeneration cycle, refer to your softener owner’s manual or call your equipment supplier for assistance.*
- Eye wash stations
- Emergency showers

5. Empty and clean any devices or small appliances that may have come into contact with the unsafe water.

This includes:

- Vaporizers and Humidifiers
- Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)
- Oral, medical or health care devices
- Pet water supplies - Be sure to empty all water bowls, bottles, or other water supplies for your pet. Wash the pet bowl, bottle or other water supply. Then refill with tap water.
- Kitchen counter top appliances such as coffee makers

6. Empty and clean any personal health care devices, if the device or a part of a device is unable to be thoroughly cleaned it, or the part that is unable to be cleaned should be replaced.

This includes:

- Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)
- Oral, medical or health care devices
- Throw out any food, drinks, baby formulas, and medicines that were made with, or came into contact with the unsafe water.

For more information about harmful algal blooms:

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehadm/swimming/pdf/DoH-HarmfulAlgalBlooms-0614.pdf>

Source: Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Environmental Health & Radiation Protection (Sept. 2015)