

Sallal Water Association strives to provide pure, untreated water at low cost to members.

September 2019 Newsletter

Please submit questions/comments to info@sallal.com

E. coli Boil Water Advisory Emergency Member Meeting Summary

Q & A from Emergency Member Meeting on Wednesday, September 25

1. What happened and when?

- **Late on Sept. 13th:** As part of our regular water sampling process, the independent test lab that Sallal uses reported that E. coli had been detected in the samples taken from the Riverpoint area. Per Department of Health guidelines, notification is not made to customers until the findings can be confirmed to ensure that we do not cause a panic over a false positive result. Staff immediately collected additional samples from the Riverpoint neighborhood. Those results showed one positive and one negative for the same sampling location. After consultation with the Department of Health, staff took a third round of samples from the Riverpoint neighborhood on the afternoon of Monday, Sept. 16th.
- **Afternoon of Tuesday, Sept. 17th:** Conclusive results came back from the lab. Staff then immediately began the notification process for the Riverpoint neighborhood, and then isolated and chlorinated that part of the system. We also took additional samples throughout the rest of the system.
- **Afternoon of Wednesday, Sept. 18th:** Because the Sallal Water System circulates water from all three wells, the entire system was placed on a boil water advisory the afternoon of Wednesday, Sept. 18th. We immediately began using our emergency notification systems (see the next question). We also began making bottled water available to our members. Sallal staff also delivered water to the elderly and incapacitated members who are unable to leave their home.
- **Afternoon of Friday, Sept. 20th:** We received the results from the lab for the twenty-five (25) system-wide samples that were taken on Wednesday, Sept. 18th. There were five new samples that tested positive for E. coli. One of those came directly from Well #2, which is one of three sources for the entire system. We shut down Well #2 early Friday afternoon (Sept. 20th). Staff immediately began adding chlorine to the system.
- **Saturday, Sept. 21st:** Sallal announced that members could get water directly from the local QFC and Safeway grocery stores and Sallal will reimburse the stores for the costs.
- **Monday, Sept. 23rd:** We also notified the members that they could get 2.5

gallon containers of water at Safeway and QFC, instead of just smaller bottles.

- **Wednesday, Sept. 25th:** An automated chlorination system was installed on Well #3. An information update meeting was held for the members at 7:00 PM at the Snoqualmie Casino.

2. Why wasn't I notified? Why did it take so long to notify members?

- We had approximately 1,200 e-mail addresses that were previously provided by members. We used that distribution list to immediately notify the membership. We also asked King County Emergency Management to use their *ALERT King County* system to notify anyone in our service area that has registered with them. This contacted those people's cell phones, home phones and e-mail addresses in less than five minutes. We also posted the notice on our website, utilized social media and reached out to the news media to get the word out.

We strongly encourage you to provide your updated contact information to Sallal and King County for emergencies such as these. (To sign up for the *free* *ALERT King County* service, go to <http://www.kingcounty.gov/ALERTKingCounty> You can provide as much, or as little, information as you want. This will also help to notify you for other types of emergencies, such as wildfires, winter-storm related issues and other types of incidents.)

3. What is the source of the bacteria?

- We found E. coli in Well #2. This ***may*** be the source for the whole system, or it may not be. We don't know, and it's possible we may never know. The Dept. of Health said it's rare to ever find out the cause of these types of events. There have ***not*** been any recent break-ins to any of our facilities.
- We don't know the cause of the E. coli found in Well #2. Subsequent testing at Well #2 has come back clean. We have not had any E. coli hits for Well #1 or 3 at this point. All of our lab analysis is done by an independent and Department of Health certified testing lab in Tacoma.

4. How are you going to get this Boil Water Advisory lifted?

- Sallal staff started manually putting disinfectant into the reservoirs on Friday, September 20th and installed an automated chlorination system to Well #3 on Tuesday, September 24th, but couldn't parts to install an automated chlorination system for Well #1 until Thursday, September 26th.

- Once the required level of chlorine is reached throughout the system, staff must obtain a set of clean samples and then a second set of clean samples 24 hours later. At that point, the Dept. of Health will allow us to remove the boil water advisory. We are hoping this will be completed before the end of the week of September 30th.

5. Will Sallal be discounting our bills / paying for our replacement filters / etc. for this event?

- The board has not yet had an opportunity to address this question and will have to meet to figure out how to handle the billing during this situation.
- Keep in mind that Sallal is a non-profit, member-owned co-op. Any reimbursements come out of other member's rates.

6. Is there enough water for us if Well #2 can't be used?

- We have turned off Well #2. Wells #1 and #3 can provide all the pressure and capacity needed to continue to serve all members as we have previously. The risk is that we won't have any backup if anything else goes wrong or if we have any equipment failures at the two remaining wells. That is why we need to get Well #2 operational as soon as possible.
- Work on Well #4 is still wrapping up the design and permitting stages. The project will then need to go through a bidding process. It will be at least nine months before we could begin pumping any water from it.

7. What does this mean for the future of Sallal's water?

- The Dept. of Health has required Sallal to implement permanent disinfection of Well #2 due to the E. coli hit. We are still investigating the full, long-term implications this may have, but it appears likely that we may no longer be able to offer untreated water.
- If we must disinfect long-term, we will work with DOH to find out if some of the alternatives to chlorine (exposing the water to ultraviolet light or ozone) might be viable and will investigate the pros and cons of all options available.

8. Is Sallal going to reimburse me for my business's loss of income or medical expenses?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any claim received by Sallal will be forwarded to Sallal’s insurance company. • Sallal will seek guidance from the insurer regarding the disposition of any claim. We cannot offer assurance that a claim will be paid because claim approval is likely to be based on fault. There has been no determination of fault at this point. • A member’s own insurance may have provisions that cover damage claims that you may have suffered.
<p>Home Sanitizing Process once the Advisory is lifted</p>	<p>Flush household pipes/faucets first.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To flush your plumbing, run all your cold-water faucets on full for at least 5 minutes each. • For a residence with multiple levels, start at the top of the house. <p>Ice and automatic ice makers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash and sanitize ice trays and ice bins with a solution of two tablespoons bleach to one gallon of water • For an icemaker, dump existing ice and flush the water feed lines by making and discarding three batches of ice cubes. <p>Hot water heaters, water coolers, in-line filters, and other appliances with direct water connections or water tanks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run enough water to completely replace at least one full volume of all lines and tanks, including water heaters and refrigerator water lines. • Replace water filters after completing all flushing. • Run dishwashers empty for at least two cycles. <p>Replace other water filters, as they are disposable and may be contaminated.</p>
<p>Two New Board Members</p>	<p>Due to two openings triggered by the resignation of previous members, the Board of Trustees interviewed several candidates to fill the open positions. Ann Reed was selected in July to fill David Edward’s position, and Larry Costello was selected in August to fill Michael Thomas’s position. Ms. Reed is a former Washington State public school employee serving as a teacher for 26 years and an administrator for 16 years. She is currently retired and has been a Sallal member for five years. Mr. Costello is a licensed professional engineer with 36 years of experience in energy, manufacturing, and transportation projects. Currently, he is an independent consultant. Both appointees will be placed on upcoming ballots for approval by the members at the next annual members meeting, typically in late March.</p>