



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 8**

1595 Wynkoop Street  
DENVER, CO 80202-1129  
Phone 800-227-8917  
<http://www.epa.gov/region08>

Ref: 8P-W

**ADVICE TO HOMEOWNERS WHEN THE WATER SUPPLY IS CONTAMINATED  
WITH A VOLATILE ORGANIC CHEMICAL (VOC)**

If the concentration of the VOC in the drinking water supply exceeds EPA's maximum contaminant level (MCL), this water should not be used for drinking or cooking. This action will reduce, but not eliminate, exposure to the VOC.

Because the VOC evaporates easily from water after it comes out of the tap, other uses of the water will increase the concentration of the VOC in the air in the home. Therefore, exposure will continue when the residents breathe the air. The types of activities that are of greatest concern are those where large volumes of heater water are agitated or aerated, such as showering/bathing, using an automatic dishwasher, and using a washing machine.

The amount of exposure by inhalation depends on the concentration of the VOC in the water, the amount of water used in the home, the size of the home, the degree of air exchange in the home, and the amount of time spent in the home.

The only way to eliminate completely exposure to the VOC would be to stop all uses of the contaminated water in the home. This is obviously not practical for most situations. Below are some recommendations that will reduce exposure to the VOC while the problem with the water supply is being corrected.

- While showering/bathing, minimize the length of the shower/bath. Ventilate the bathroom to the outside with a fan or an open window and keep the bathroom door closed to reduce the spread of the VOC to the rest of the home.
- While a dishwasher is running, stay out of the kitchen. Ventilate the kitchen to the outside with a fan or open window and keep the kitchen door closed.
- While a washing machine is running, stay out of the laundry area. Ventilate the room to the outside with a fan or an open window and keep the laundry room door closed.
- Stop using a home humidifier that uses tap water.



*Printed on Recycled Paper*