

AMADOR WATER AGENCY RECOMMENDS STEPS TO PREPARE AGAINST WATER OUTAGES THIS WINTER

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(Sutter Creek) The Amador Water Agency is recommending steps for local families to take to prepare their homes against water outages that may result this winter from breakdowns and power outages, especially in the 35-year-old upcountry Central Amador Water System (CAWP).

“Most people don’t realize we are operating an aging water system upcountry that has broken down hundreds of times in recent years, so we’re urging our customers to be prepared just in case system failures cause a water outage this winter,” said Gene Mancebo, general manager of the Amador Water Agency. “Despite many breakdowns in recent years, crews work around the clock through winter conditions to fix the system before our customers run out of water—and that’s one of our top priorities this winter.”

Dozens of times each year in rural Amador County, power outages also cause potential interruptions of water service because electricity powers the water pumps. In the upcountry area, mechanical failures also shut down the aging and overtaxed CAWP system, necessitating water conservation by homeowners.

The Amador Water Agency recommends the following steps to increase the safety of your home this winter:

- Keep enough water on hand for drinking and cooking for an outage lasting up to 72 hours.
- Store water for your pets and for flushing toilets.
- In case there is also a power outage, prepare an emergency kit with a flashlight, batteries, food, candles, and an emergency generator.
- Ensure your home is fire safe! Fire hydrants may not work when water service is off and winter weather could delay firefighting crews.
- During any outage and 24 hours after an outage, the agency suggests customers either boil tap water or use bottled water for drinking and cooking.
- Report water outages or leaks by calling the Water Agency at 209-223-3018.

On-call and emergency personnel are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond to problems in the water systems, though recent budget reductions have reduced the overall number of AWA crews available to respond during emergencies.

The Water Agency also encourages local residents to help by following neighborhood signs and announcements that may ask them to conserve water due to an electrical outage or mechanical failure. For further information, the public can visit the Amador Water Agency website (www.amadorwater.org) for water conservation tips.

The Amador Water Agency operates four water systems throughout the county, some of which are being operated past their estimated useful lives and are due for replacement. Since 2004, Amador County's upcountry CAWP water system has failed or been out of operation more than 200 times due to a variety of causes that include electrical or mechanical failures (97 incidents), communications failures (14 incidents) and power outages (52 incidents). The Water Agency is investigating options for improving this system and provide safe, reliable water service to all customers in Amador County.

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