

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**October 1, 2015**

**Dam, reservoir owners, operators should begin lowering water levels**

COLUMBIA - Owners and operators of reservoirs statewide should check their dams today, and through the next several days, for possible problems caused by heavy rainfall from Hurricane Joaquin, according to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

"Owners of reservoirs should take the appropriate steps to safely lower the water level in their reservoir if additional storage for the anticipated rainfall is needed," said Chuck Gorman with DHEC's dam safety program. "If there is a dam downstream of your dam and you are lowering your water level, please call the owner of that dam and advise him or her about what you are doing. Before and after the storm has passed, any accumulated trash and debris should be cleared from spillways."

According to the National Weather Service, a significant amount of rain is expected in the Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic United States.

"Dam owners should be aware of the conditions at their dams during such events," Gorman said. "If such problems develop that failure of the dam might be imminent, the owner or operator of the dam should contact the downstream property owners and the local public safety officials."

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 3, 2015**

**DHEC closes numerous clam and oyster harvesting areas**

COLUMBIA, S.C. - The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control has issued a precautionary closure of much of the state's shellfish harvesting due to excessive rainfall, the agency announced today.

This closure affects all shellfish harvesting for the area extending from St. Helena Sound, including the Coosaw River to the mouth of and including the Bull River, then continuing north to the North Carolina state line. This closure will remain in effect until sampling results indicate that bacteria levels are suitable for shellfish harvesting to resume.

For more information on clam and oyster harvesting areas in Beaufort County, call DHEC's Environmental Quality Control office at (843) 846-1030. For information on Georgetown and Horry counties' clam and oyster harvesting areas, call DHEC's EQC office at (843) 238-4378. For more information on Charleston County clam and oyster harvesting areas, call DHEC's EQC office at (843) 953-0160.

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## **DHEC warning concerning floodwater dangers**

COLUMBIA, S.C. (Saturday, October 3, 2015, 4:30 p.m.) – South Carolinians are cautioned about wading or playing in floodwaters resulting from the heavy rainfall in the state.

“We strongly warn residents to stay away from floodwaters and, to reduce the risk of infections and traumatic injuries including drowning, don’t swim, play or boat in the water,” said Jamie Blair, deputy director of the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control’s Office of Public Health Preparedness. “Water from flooding can carry viruses, bacteria, chemicals and other physical items picked up as it moves through storm water systems, across industrial sites, yards, roads and parking lots. These threats can cause serious illness and injury and should be avoided if at all possible.”

### **Blair offered specific tips for preventing illness and injury resulting from flooding, including:**

- Prevent children from playing in flooded areas. Rapidly rushing floodwaters pose a high risk for drowning.
- Keep children from playing with toys that have been contaminated by floodwater until the toys can be cleaned/disinfected.
- Wash children's hands frequently and always before meals.
- Take care to protect open wounds from floodwaters.

Blair says flooding can also create situations in which animals, reptiles and insects can be more likely to come in contact with humans, resulting in bites and stings. If you have a reason that you must enter the floodwaters, be alert and try to avoid coming into contact.

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## **CAUTION URGED AROUND LOCAL DAMS**

COLUMBIA, S.C. (October 4, 2015, 5:35 p.m.) – The S.C. Emergency Response Team continues to caution residents of potential dangers of rising waters, including those associated with neighborhood dams and flooding. The Department of Health and Environmental Control has been contacted by dam operators and made aware of several dams across the state that have overtopped, and some that have failed.

“If you live below a small, neighborhood dam, please be vigilant of its status,” said DHEC Director of Environmental Affairs Elizabeth Dieck. “We would strongly encourage you to pay attention to local news reports that can contain important information about the status of your dam. Be prepared to take appropriate actions you feel are necessary for your safety or as directed by your local emergency officials.”

Avoid floodwater at all costs. Do not walk through floodwater and do not play in it. Rising water from flooding can carry viruses, bacteria, chemicals and other submerged objects picked up as it moves through storm water systems, across industrial sites, yards, roads and parking lots. These threats can cause serious illness, injury and drowning, and should be avoided. Flooding can also create situations in which animals, reptiles and insects can be more likely to come in contact with humans, resulting in bites and stings.

If you receive your drinking water from a private well and have experienced flooding, take precautions to boil your water before drinking.

If you are on the City of Columbia water system, you should boil your water before drinking. For other water systems, you will be told if you need to boil your water. If you haven't heard and want to be sure, contact them directly, or boil your water as a safety precaution.

Residents with questions about the statewide ongoing flooding incident can call the SCEMD 24-hour public information line at 1-866-246-0133.

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## **Calhoun County Health Department Closed**

Columbia, S.C. (Monday, October 5, 2015, 5:40 p.m.) – The Calhoun County Health Department is closed due to flood damage caused by severe weather the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) announced today.

The facility will be closed until repairs can be made. DHEC is currently working with the county to provide alternative locations in the community. In the interim, clients are directed to call 800-868-0404 to make appointments at the nearby Orangeburg County area health departments. Please see below for office locations and phone numbers.

### **Main Office**

1550 Carolina Avenue, Orangeburg, SC 29115  
(803) 533-5480

### **Holly Hill**

8423A Old State Road, Holly Hill, SC 29059  
(803) 496-3324

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## **DHEC Offers Free Tetanus Vaccinations for Flood-Affected South Carolinians**

COLUMBIA, SC (October 9, 2015, 9:00 p.m.) – The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control reminds all storm-affected residents that a tetanus vaccination is recommended if it's been 10 years or more since your last tetanus vaccination or you have experienced an injury and your shot is more than five years old.

In the event of a puncture wound or wound contaminated by floodwater, individuals should consult a healthcare provider.

For those who require a tetanus vaccination, there will be no-cost Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) vaccination clinics this weekend.

### **Two mobile clinics will be held Saturday:**

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at A.C. Flora High School, 1 Falcon Drive, Columbia

3 to 5 p.m. at Pine Glen Subdivision, Seawright Road, Columbia

### **Clinics will be held 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday at the following locations:**

Garners Ferry Adult Activity Center, 8620 Garners Ferry Road, Hopkins

Irmo Branch Library, 6251 Saint Andrews Road, Columbia

DHEC will also offer no cost tetanus vaccinations at health departments beginning Monday, Oct. 12. To make an appointment for a tetanus vaccination at a health department near you, call 1-800-868-0404.

DHEC will continue to announce vaccination clinics at [www.scdhec.gov](http://www.scdhec.gov) as times and locations become available.

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### **Eau Claire Women, Infant and Children Satellite Clinic Closed**

Columbia, S.C. (Wednesday, October 7, 2015, 4:55 p.m.) -- The Eau Claire Women, Infant and Children (WIC) satellite clinic in Richland County is indefinitely closed due to flood damage caused by severe weather the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) announced today.

DHEC will provide services at the Richland County Health Department until the clinic can reopen. In the interim, clients are directed to call 800-868-0404 to make appointments at the Richland County Health department. Please see below for office location and phone number.

Richland County Health Department  
2000 Hampton Street  
Columbia, SC 29204  
(803) 576-2980

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**October 9, 2015**

**DHEC Expands Private Well Water Testing Hours**

COLUMBIA – The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control announced today that it will be expanding its private well water testing office hours in several counties. Standard operating hours will continue for all other office locations.

If you have a private well that was flooded during the recent flooding event, you can have your private well tested for fecal coliform bacteria by DHEC to be sure your water is safe to drink. Sample bottles may be picked up at a DHEC Health or Environmental location Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

To extend access to testing, several DHEC Environmental offices will be open on weekends starting Oct. 10 to Nov. 1, 2015 between 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for sample drop-off. You may also pick up a sample bottle during that time. These offices are in Florence, Charleston, Aiken, Myrtle Beach, Orangeburg, Sumter, and Greenwood counties. Contact information for all locations can be found [here](#).

Other locations where bottles are available and samples can be dropped of in the Charleston County area include, McClellanville Town Hall and Ridgeville Town Hall. Locations in the Columbia area, include Eastover Town Hall and Gadsden Community Center.

In addition, the DHEC lab will be providing sample bottles and accepting samples during the same extend operating hour period. The DHEC lab is located at 8231 Parklane Rd. Columbia, SC 29223.

DHEC advises residents with wells in counties affected by floodwaters to disinfect your well and have the well water tested before using it if it does not taste, smell or look like it did before the event. If your well was flooded, you can assume it's contaminated. For information about private well disinfection, [click here](#).

People with questions about wells can contact the nearest DHEC Regional Environmental Quality Control office or the Division of Water Quality at (803) 898-3376.

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## **Calhoun County Health Department Finds New Home**

COLUMBIA, S.C. (October 9, 2015, 9 a.m.) – The Calhoun County Health Department will be housed temporarily in a new location, the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) announced today.

Operations will begin Monday Oct. 12, 2015 at the OCtech Quick Job Development Center (101 Courthouse Drive, St. Matthews, SC 29135).

The county health department was closed earlier this week due to flood damage caused by severe weather. The facility will be closed until repairs can be made. In the interim, clients are directed to call 800-868-0404 to make appointments at the temporary office location,

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**DHEC Adds Third Location for Free Tetanus Vaccinations on Oct. 11**

**COLUMBIA, S.C. (October 10, 2015, 6:30 p.m.)** – The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control has added a third location in the Midlands for citizens who were impacted by the storm to receive a tetanus vaccination on Sunday, Oct. 11. A mobile unit will be at the Richland County Sheriff's Headquarters in addition to the two previously announced locations.

**Clinics will be held 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday at the following locations:**

Richland County Sheriff Headquarters, 5623 Two Notch Road, Columbia

Garners Ferry Adult Activity Center, 8620 Garners Ferry Road, Hopkins

Irmo Branch Library, 6251 Saint Andrews Road, Columbia

DHEC reminds all storm-affected residents that a tetanus vaccination is recommended if it's been 10 years or more since your last tetanus vaccination or you have experienced an injury and your shot is more than five years old.

DHEC will also offer no cost tetanus vaccinations at health departments statewide beginning Monday, Oct. 12. To make an appointment for a tetanus vaccination at a health department near you, call 1-800-868-0404.

DHEC will continue to announce vaccination clinics at [www.scdhec.gov](http://www.scdhec.gov) as times and locations become available.

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## **DHEC Announces Locations for More Free Tetanus Vaccination Clinics**

*Vaccinates More than 1,300 Residents in Clinics to Date*

**COLUMBIA, S.C. (October 12, 2015, 6 p.m.)** – The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control announced additional tetanus vaccination clinics in Florence, Georgetown, Lexington, Richland and Williamsburg counties.

Clinics to date resulted in 1,362 people receiving a tetanus vaccine. The vaccine is recommended if it's been 10 years or more since your last tetanus vaccination or you have experienced an injury and your shot is more than five years old.

DHEC is also offering no-cost tetanus vaccinations for South Carolinians affected by flooding at state health department locations. To make an appointment for a tetanus vaccination at a health department near you, call 1-800-868-0404.

Mobile clinics are scheduled at the following times and locations:

### **Tuesday, Oct. 13**

Williamsburg County Department of Social Services  
831 N. Eastland Ave.  
Kingstree, S.C.  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Richland County Sheriff's Department-Columbia Place Substation  
7201 Two Notch Road  
Columbia, S.C.  
9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Wednesday, Oct. 14**

Johnsonville Public Library  
242 S. Georgetown Highway  
Johnsonville, S.C.  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Lexington County Library Cayce Branch (Also a Disaster Recovery Center)  
1500 Augusta Road  
West Columbia, S.C.  
9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Thursday, Oct. 15**

Andrews Recreation Center  
209 S. Maple St.  
Andrews, S.C.  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

City of Columbia Distribution Center  
Dutch Square Mall  
421 Bush River Road  
Columbia, S.C.

9 a.m-5 p.m.

**Friday Oct. 16**

Choppee Recreation Center

259 Choppee Road

Georgetown, S.C.

9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Lexington County Main Library

5440 Augusta Road

Lexington, S.C.

9 a.m.-2 p.m.

DHEC will continue to announce vaccination clinics at [www.scdhec.gov](http://www.scdhec.gov) as times and locations become available.

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## **DHEC Reminds South Carolinians How to Identify Agency-Sponsored Well Testing Program**

*DHEC Will Not Leave Bottles at Residences*

**COLUMBIA, S.C. (Friday, October 16, 2015 9 p.m.)** —The S.C. Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control reminds residents about the identifying factors in its no-cost private well water bacteriological testing program.

DHEC expanded its office hours for sample bottle pick-up and drop-off in several counties through Nov. 1 to assist South Carolinians whose private wells were flooded during the recent event.

DHEC's private well water bacteriological testing program includes:

- Customers picking up bottles and accompanying paperwork at designated locations,
- Glass bottles and the DHEC logo on supporting paperwork,
- Customers dropping off bottles with water at designated locations.

The DHEC program will not:

- Leave a bottle at your private residence,
- Send someone to visit your home unsolicited.

DHEC is among numerous agencies participating in the statewide response to victims affected by flooding. In disaster situations, some people and groups attempt to take advantage of others who might be vulnerable.

In the event you are contacted by someone posing as a government inspector or other emergency responder and that person is unable to provide adequate proof of identification, alert local law enforcement immediately.

Learn more about DHEC's private well testing and extended hours [here](#).

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**October 16, 2015**

### **DHEC Issues Orders to Ensure Dam Safety Following 1,000-Year Flood**

COLUMBIA, S.C. - Following the recent historic rain and flooding event, the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) announced today that it is ordering actions at a number of dams statewide.

"As a result of the 1,000-year flood, many dams across our state were damaged and have been identified as needing repair," said DHEC Director Catherine Heigel. "DHEC remains committed to ensuring public safety and will be aggressive in pursuing all necessary safety measures to make sure that dam owners are making these needed repairs as quickly as possible."

As the state's regulatory agency, DHEC's role is to provide input and assistance to dam owners and operators and to advise on regulatory compliance. Dam owners are responsible for maintaining the structural integrity of their dams.

The emergency orders are part of DHEC's ongoing proactive assessment of all Class One and Class Two dams across the state in the wake of the historic rains and flooding, which damaged some dams and caused 36 to fail. **There is no immediate threat to public safety at this time.**

As of today, 390 dams have been assessed. Based on these initial assessments, the agency has issued emergency orders to 63 dams.

Under the S.C. Dams and Reservoirs Safety Regulations, an emergency order may direct the dam owner to:

- lower the water level by releasing water from the reservoir;
- completely empty the reservoir;
- take whatever immediate measures necessary to reduce the risk of dam failure.

The owner's decision to repair or replace a dam will be subject to DHEC review and approval. DHEC will prioritize review of dam permit applications associated with this natural disaster. The permitting for these repairs could take days to weeks depending upon the complexity of the repairs that need to be made.

For detailed information concerning the orders and which dams are involved, [click here](#).

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 17, 2015**

**DHEC reopens some shellfish beds in Georgetown County**

COLUMBIA, S.C. - The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has reopened shellfish beds previously closed due to excessive rainfall in Georgetown County, the agency announced today.

"Water quality data indicate that the approved area in Murrells Inlet is now suitable for harvesting," said Mike Pearson, manager of DHEC's Shellfish Sanitation Section.

For information on Georgetown and Horry counties' clam and oyster harvesting areas, call DHEC's Environmental Quality Control office at (843) 238-4378. For more information on clam and oyster harvesting areas in Beaufort County, call DHEC's EQC office at (843) 846-1030. For more information on Charleston County clam and oyster harvesting areas, call DHEC's EQC office at (843) 953-0160.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 22, 2015**

**DHEC reopens many shellfish beds closed by flooding**

COLUMBIA, S.C. - The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has reopened many shellfish beds previously closed due to excessive rainfall earlier this month, the agency announced today.

"Water quality data indicate that the approved harvesting areas in Charleston and Colleton counties are suitable for harvesting," said Mike Pearson, manager of DHEC's Shellfish Sanitation Section.

The following harvesting areas have been reopened:

- St. Helena Sound north to the southern shore of Stono Inlet
- The northern shore of Dewees Inlet extending up Dewees Creek north to McClellanville and Mud Bay, and out to Cape Romain Harbor

The following areas will remain closed to harvesting until sampling results indicate they are again suitable for harvesting:

- The northern shore of the Stono Inlet north to the Charleston Harbor
- The southern shore of Dewees Inlet extending into Dewees Creek South to the Charleston Harbor
- McClellanville and Muddy Bay out to Cape Romain Harbor, north to Litchfield and Midway Inlet.

For information on Georgetown and Horry counties' clam and oyster harvesting areas, call DHEC's Environmental Quality Control office at (843) 238-4378. For more information on clam and oyster harvesting areas in Beaufort County, call DHEC's EQC office at (843) 846-1030. For more information on Charleston County clam and oyster harvesting areas, call DHEC's EQC office at (843) 953-0150.

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