

Possible Impact of Floods on Water Quality

Flooding has the potential to have an impact on town water supplies, even in areas which are not directly affected by flooding.

Below is an overview of a few of the potential issues related to this, which may affect fish.

Contamination with Sewerage

If heavily contaminated then do not use. Also note: **if you are working with contaminated water use gloves and wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.**

Sediment

If water is carrying a heavy sediment load then do not use. Low sediment levels will cause minimal if any harm to the fish – remember fish are exposed to this as a general course in nature. However, heavy sediment loads could damage gills and will smother or block mechanical and biological filters. A pre-filter system on your tap will help reduce any problems from sediment – filtration to 20 microns is sufficient.

Chlorine

To reduce the potential for disease to be carried in water, chlorine is routinely added to town water supplies. Under flood conditions extra chlorine may be added to town water. Therefore it is highly recommended to use a good water conditioner that will treat both chlorine and chloramines when adding new water to tanks. An activated carbon filter on your tap will also assist with this.

Heavy Metal such as Aluminium and Copper

Various chemicals and metals are added to town water supplies to make them safe for humans to drink. Aluminium is added to reduce sediment,

copper to reduce algae. As these could be an issue with the flood waters, levels of these sort of metals may be elevated. A good water conditioner that will remove/ eliminate/ bind toxic heavy metals will reduce problems with these. They are most likely to affect fish from soft/acid waters first such as Tetras and Discus.

Inability to water change

Sometimes during times of emergency you may find yourself unable to water change your systems for various reasons.

Following these steps may help you avoid large losses during this period.

- Reduce feeding amount and frequency.
- Lower ph in all systems to reduce ammonia toxicity.
- Add extra aeration.
- Use black water extract to assist binding heavy metals and lowering ph.
- Add ammonia binding agents when needed.

Depending on the time frame in which you are unable to water change, issues ranging from loss in oxygen, build up of nitrates and fish deaths can vary, so it's important to **act fast and test regularly.**

For further information

If you are unsure about your water, you should check the website of, or contact your local council or water supply body.

The Aquarium Industries website also contains a number of useful care sheets, including tips on how to recover a tank which has been damaged by flood waters.