

## **DRINKING from your Water Heater**

**Step 1: Ensure the water in the tank stays clean.** If you haven't already shut off water to the house, do that now. If you can't shut off water to the entire house, at least close the valve that allows water to enter the water heater (the supply valve). This will keep potentially contaminated water from sullyng the water in your tank.

**Step 2: Cut off power to the tank.**

- ELECTRIC water heater: flip the breaker supplying electricity to the appliance. Rationale... you're going to drain the tank and you never want to run this appliance without water in it.

- GAS water heater: shut off the gas to the tank. Rationale... if you are eyeballing your hot water tank for drinking water you probably can't afford a hot shower.

**Step 3: Allow the water to cool.** This will take hours!

**Step 4: Attach a hose.** Near the bottom of the tank is the drain. Attach a washing machine hose or garden hose to it. Do NOT open the valve yet!

**Step 5: Break the vacuum.** Water won't come out of the tank until air is allowed in. Disconnect the hot water line at the top of the tank. If you can't get the line off, turn on a hot water faucet in the house to allow air into the tank.

**Step 6: Collect the water.** Open the valve at the bottom of the tank and collect the water in a clean storage container. The first few gallons may contain rust and/or sediment. Let it settle before using it.

**Step 7: Treat the water.** Add bleach, stir, and let the water stand for 30 minutes.

- Regular bleach (5.25%) – add 8 drops per gallon.
- Concentrated bleach (8.25%) – add 5 drops per gallon.

**\*\* BEFORE disaster hits, mark the supply valve.** Run the hot water from any sink. Touch the two pipes attached to the top of the water heater. The "supply" line will be the colder one. Mark the valve as "supply". This will be the one to close in an emergency so that contaminated water will not go into the tank as you drain the clean drinking water that is stored in it.

**\*\*Allow the tank to fill completely** before restoring power to the water heater.