

BOIL WATER ORDER GUIDELINES FOR HOME AND PERSONAL USE

A **boil water advisory** or **boil water order** is a public health advisory or directive given by government or health authorities to consumers when a community's drinking water is, or could be, contaminated by pathogens. Under a boil water advisory (BWA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that water be brought to a rolling boil for one minute before it is consumed in order to kill protozoa, bacteria and viruses. At altitudes above 2,000 meters, boiling should be extended to 3 minutes.

BWAs are typically issued when monitoring of water being served to consumers detects E.coli or other microbiological indicators of sewage contamination. Another reason for a BWA is a failure of distribution system integrity evidenced by a loss of system pressure. While loss of pressure does not necessarily mean the water has been contaminated, it does mean that pathogens may be able to enter the piped-water system and thus be carried to consumers.

BOIL WATER ORDER GUIDELINES FOR FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

To continue operating under “boil water” orders or interrupted water service all retail food service establishments must secure and use potable water from an approved source (e.g., from tank trucks or bottled potable water) for all water usage. This includes for the following uses:

1. Coffee, tea, and other beverages made in the food establishment
2. Ice
3. Washing produce or thawing frozen foods
4. Employee hand washing
5. Washing all dishes and cooking utensils
6. All water used in 3-compartment sinks
7. All water for sanitizing solutions

It must be noted that equipment plumbed directly into the water system such as direct feed coffee urns, ice machines that manufacture ice on site, and post-mix soda or beverage machines may not be used during the boil order.

If it is not possible to obtain potable water from tank trucks or bottled potable water and if a heat source is available, boil the water vigorously for 5 minutes.

After “boil water” order is lifted or water service resumes, these precautionary measures must be followed:

1. Run all water lines for one minute to flush contaminated water from system. This includes each fill point for post-mix soda and beverage machines.
2. Clean and sanitize all fixtures, sinks and equipment connected to water lines.
3. Run your dishwasher empty through three complete cycles to flush the water lines and assure that the dishwasher is cleaned internally before washing equipment and utensils in it.
4. Discard all ice in ice machines; clean and sanitize (1 table spoon of bleach per gallon of potable water) the interior surfaces; run the ice through 3 cycles; and discard ice with each cycle.
5. Replace all ice machine filters and beverage dispenser filters and flush all water lines for 10 to 15 minutes.