

FACT SHEET

Boil-Water Notice Procedures - Food-Service Facilities

If a food facility is **COMPLETELY WITHOUT WATER**, the facility must immediately cease operations.

OR

Obtain an alternate supply of potable water and/or ice and provide satisfactory methods for handwashing, food preparation, and equipment cleaning and sanitation.

Is a Boil-Water Notice that serious? YES! Disease transmission of ingested bacteria such as E. coli and Shigella (among others), is possible through the ingestion of contaminated water sources. These organisms primarily affect the gastrointestinal system and cause diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting. To kill most organisms, bring water to a rolling boil for **THREE MINUTES** and follow these guidelines.

The Department of Public Health requires:

1.) Food establishments **voluntarily cease operations** until the water has been declared acceptable by local authorities.

OR

2.) If your food service must remain open, against the recommendation of the Department, you shall:

- **Drinking Water** must be bottled, boiled for **THREE MINUTES**, or obtained from a commercially approved supply outside the contaminated area.
- Post “**Do Not Drink Water**” signs in restrooms, and disconnect drinking fountains.
- **Do not dispense fountain drinks** until after the notice is lifted, and the system is sanitized.
- **Coffee and tea** should be made from bottled water or water that is boiled for **THREE MINUTES** before brewing.
- **Ice** made from water from the affected facility cannot be used, but ice from commercially approved sources outside the affected area is acceptable. Any ice made during the containment period must be discarded and the machine should be shut off. Once the order is lifted, the machine must be cleaned thoroughly and a run of ice must be produced and discarded prior to safe re-use of the machine.
- **Tap water** should not be used as an ingredient in food unless it is boiled for **THREE MINUTES** prior to inclusion in the food product.
- **Fresh fruits and vegetables** may be served if processed outside the affected area and were washed in an approved manner. In-place spray units or units that periodically spray water on products to maintain freshness must be shut down during the boil-order period.
- **Handwashing** must be performed with heated bottled water, safe water from an alternative source, or water that is boiled for **THREE MINUTES**. Employees should follow handwashing by using hand-sanitizing wipes or hand- sanitizer.
- **Disposable single service eating and drinking utensils** may be substituted for both food preparation and food service.
- **Cooking/Serving Utensil and Equipment:** In three (3) compartment sinks – washing, rinsing and sanitizing procedures shall be followed with a chlorine sanitizing solution of 50 to 100 ppm (or other approved sanitizer in accordance with the manufacturer’s guidelines).

AFTER THE BOIL-WATER NOTICE IS LIFTED

Once the Boil-Water Notice is officially lifted, all water lines (including drink dispensers, all equipment with water reservoirs, tea/coffee machines, ice machines, etc.) should be flushed, cleaned and sanitized. After this thorough cleansing, the water supply should be allowed to run **FOR AT LEAST FIVE MINUTES** prior to use. In addition, any in-line filters should be replaced, and the first batch of ice or other product containing water from the affected supply should be discarded.

For questions, or to speak with your health inspector, contact the Division at (636) 949-1800.