

BOIL WATER NOTICES

Checklist for Food Service Establishments

If a boil water notice or order is issued for your drinking water supply, your customers and staff may be exposed to disease causing organisms in the water. Your first duty is to determine how to protect your customers and staff from exposure. **If you cannot control potential exposures as detailed below, or if the Health Department directs your closure, then you must close until the drinking water is again fit for consumption.**

If you remain open, here are some actions that will help you to control exposures:

- Do not allow customers or staff to drink tap water that has not been boiled. **A rolling boil that is held for one minute is recommended.**
- Do not give customers or staff items made with tap water for any purposes; including ice, beverages or food.
- Do not use tap water for food preparation and washing or chilling food contact surfaces/equipment without appropriate precautions.
- Clearly sign, "Do Not Drink", all public accessible sinks, spigots, and fountains. If possible, turn them off at their emergency shut off valves.
- Provide soap and boiled (and then completely cooled) or bottled water for staff and customers to wash their hands in restrooms.

Pay particular attention to food preparation and sanitation:

- Food and beverages prepared with tap water during the boil water event must be discarded.
- Tap water can be used to cook food or wash produce and prepare uncooked foods if **boiled for 1 minute before use (and cooled if appropriate)**. This may take 20 or 30 minutes, so plan ahead.
- Consider adjustments to eliminate food items that are hard to prepare with limited water. If appropriate, add or switch to pre washed produce, pre packaged foods, canned vegetables, single-service tableware and bottled or canned drinks.
- If practical, use bottled water or water from a safe alternate source*. Use bagged or pre packaged ice from a safe alternate source*.
- Coffee makers connected to your water lines can be used, provided they brew the coffee at or above 190° F. You can keep using any coffee machines that you manually fill with pre-boiled or bottled water.

- Provide bottled or canned beverages, or use a pre-mix beverage machine with any water/ice dispensers turned off, drained and disconnected.
- Disconnect and drain post-mix, other beverage appliances, and ice machines. Clearly sign the machines "Do not drink" or "Do not use".
- Any ice made or mixed with ice made since the boil water event should not be used. If the age of the ice is uncertain, do not use it for drinks or in food preparation and label it as unsafe. If the event is anticipated to be short in duration, or limited in extent, simply throw the ice out to avoid cross contamination concerns.
- Hand washed dishes, cutlery, pots, and pans should be given a final rinse with a dilute bleach solution of 1 tablespoon of regular unscented bleach (5.25%) per gallon of water that was boiled or bottled. Allow to completely air dry before use.
- Commercial dishwashers are acceptable if they were manufactured and are operated with a hot sanitizing rinse of 170° F at least 30 seconds in duration and use a disinfectant rinse. Otherwise wash and completely air dry as noted for hand washing above.
- Employee hand washing must continue using soap and bottled or boiled (and cooled) water. Antimicrobial products that do not require water are not sufficient and should not be used.
- Food contact surfaces should be washed with boiled or bottled water. Tap water can be used to flush toilets and wash the floors and walls, but not food contact surfaces.
- Make sure all staff on all shifts understand and implement all needed measures.

After the boil water order/notice is lifted, the facility must be properly cleaned to fully eliminate the potential contaminants. All equipment must be flushed, disinfected as appropriate, and potentially contaminated water/ice discarded.

- Flush **all** water lines for at least 5 minutes. Then wash all sinks and fixtures. If your service connection is long or complex (like a commercial plaza), consider flushing for a longer period. Your building superintendent or landlord should be able to advise you on longer flushing times.
- All equipment, such as your beverage machine, dishwasher, ice machine and steam table, must be flushed and disinfected per the manufacturer's recommendations. Run equipment a full cycle and flush contents to waste.
- Appliances, such as your water heater and water tanks, must also be flushed. Any water filters should have their media backwashed or replaced per the manufacturer's recommendations.
- All food/beverage/ice equipment and food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized.

** For additional information, including alternate water sources and alternate water treatments, see the Frequently Asked Questions from Food Service Establishments or contact your local health department representative. If your facility has it's own water system, information found in the Fact Sheet for Public Drinking Water Suppliers may also be helpful.*

In the event of a Do Not Use order, additional precautions will be needed and you should contact your local health department for appropriate guidance.