

Guidance for Food Establishments during a Boil Water Order/Advisory

1. What is a boil water order?

- a. A boil water order is issued by the DNR to public water systems when a health threat exists, or is likely to exist, that can be resolved by boiling the water.

2. What is a boil water advisory?

- a. A boil water advisory is issued by a public water system when there is concern that a problem with drinking water may exist, but this problem has not yet been confirmed.

3. Why are boil water orders/advisories issued?

- a. They are issued to protect the health of the public from infectious agents (such as bacteria) or other threats that could be or are known to be present in drinking water.
- b. They may be issued for a variety of reasons, such as a water main break or a flood. Issues like these can cause a loss of water pressure and allow pathogens (such as bacteria) to enter the water system and be carried to consumers.

4. What procedure should be used for boiling water?

- a. Put water in a clean and sanitized, heat-resistant container.
- b. Put container on stove burner and bring to a rapid, rolling boil.
- c. **Continue rolling boil for at least 1 minute.**
- d. If necessary, cool water by placing in another sanitized container and storing in the refrigerator.

5. While under a boil order/advisory, food service establishments should take the following precautions:

- a. Do NOT distribute any foods prepared with or containing water that was not bottled or boiled without pre-approval from regulatory authorities.
- b. Do NOT distribute any foods that were touched by a food worker's bare hands who had washed their hands in non-bottled or non-boiled water without pre-approval from regulatory authorities.
- c. Use only bottled or boiled water (see Step 4 for boiling procedure) for the following:
 - i. Serving drinking water or mixed drinks.
 - ii. To wash, rinse and prepare food.
 - iii. Using water as an ingredient in any food product.
 - iv. To make consumable ice products (a preferable alternative would be to purchase commercially bagged ice from an approved source/supplier).
 - v. To wash hands before and during preparation of food, and after using the restroom.

- d. Use boiled water for wash, rinse and sanitize steps in a three compartment sink. See manufacturer's label for proper sanitizer mixing instructions.
- e. Refrain from using high temperature dish machines since the water does not reach boiling temperature for 1 minute. Use the three compartment sink method as described above in Step d. **Any alternative methods for dish washing/sanitization must be pre-approved by regulatory authorities.**
- f. Do not use any equipment with water line connections. This includes but is not limited to beverage-dispensing machines, ice machines, glass washers, dishwashers, spray misters, filters, coffee/tea urns, etc.

6. After the boil order/advisory is lifted, the following procedures should be completed with POTABLE WATER prior to re-opening:

1. Flush all pipes and faucets. Run both hot and cold water faucets for at least 5 minutes.
2. Thoroughly clean and sanitize all sinks before resuming use.
3. Discard all ice in ice machines.
4. Flush, clean and sanitize all equipment connected to water lines according to the manufacturers' instructions. This includes but is not limited to beverage-dispensing machines, ice machines, glass washers, dishwashers, spray misters, filters, coffee/tea urns, etc.
 - a. Contact beverage distributor for post-mix machine cleaning instructions.
5. Run the empty dishwasher through the wash-rinse-sanitize cycle at least 3 times to flush the water lines and assure that the dishwasher is cleaned and sanitized inside before washing dishes and utensils in it.
 - a. Consult manufacturer instructions or contact product representative if further instructions are needed.
 - b. For chemical sanitizing machines, use approved test kit to ensure appropriate sanitizer strength has been reached.
 - c. For high temperature machines, the hot water temperature must reach 180°F.
6. After completing Step 4 above, use dish washer to wash and sanitize any dirty dishes remaining since closure.
7. Run water softeners through a generation cycle.
8. Flush drinking fountains by running water continuously for at least 5 minutes.
9. After completing the above procedures, **notify your health inspector before resuming food operations.**

For more information, please call the Department of Inspections and Appeals at 515-281-6538.