

## Guidelines for Food Service Establishments During Boil Water Orders and Advisories

A boil water advisory of interrupted water service is issued when some type of event has created the potential for contamination to enter the water supply and no direct sample evidence of contamination is present. A boil water order or notice is issued when there is direct sample evidence that the system is contaminated. To continue operating under an advisory or notice, all food establishments must secure and use potable water from an approved source. Disinfection of water from suspect sources may be an alternative.

The following points of use should be considered in an emergency.

- ✓ All water used in beverages such as coffee, tea, or fountain drink dispensers
- ✓ All water used as an ingredient in any food products (i.e.: condiments, sauces, dressings, desserts, etc.)
- ✓ All water used to make consumable ice
- ✓ All water used for handwashing
- ✓ All water used for washing and sanitizing of food contact surfaces
- ✓ All water used for washing of produce
- ✓ All water used for sanitizing solution for wiping cloths
- ✓ All water used in 3-compartment sinks (unless sanitized with heat booster or chemical)

The following equipment is plumbed directly into the municipal water supply; therefore, it should not be used during a boil advisory or notice.

- ✓ Carbonated fountain drink machines
- ✓ Beverage “gun” dispensers
- ✓ Ice machines that manufacture ice
- ✓ Produce misters in grocery stores and markets
- ✓ Low-temperature/chemical sanitizing dishmachines
- ✓ Self-serve bulk water dispensers

### Acceptable Methods of Disinfection:

**Chlorination:** Add six (6) drops of liquid chlorine household bleach to one gallon of water and mix. Chlorine bleaches are inexpensive and can be secured from most grocery, discount, or drug stores. However, check the label to ensure that the active ingredient, sodium hypochlorite, is 5.25 percent.

1. Wait thirty (30) minutes after adding chlorine before using the water for drinking or cooking purposes.
2. If this treatment does not give the water a taste of chlorine, the above instructions should be repeated. Continue adding chlorine until a slight taste of chlorine is present and use this amount for future treatments.
3. The taste of chlorine is not particularly unpleasant and it will be evidence that the water is safe to drink.

**Boiling:** The water may also be purified by boiling. In this method, bring the water to a full boil for at least one (1) minute (at altitudes above one mile, boil for three minutes). Cool and aerate the boiled water by pouring it through the air from one clean container to another, or mixing rapidly with a clean utensil. Aeration will reduce the flat taste caused by boiling.

NOTE: Water filtering or treatment units may not remove all of the contaminants that the advisory or notice is targeting. Do not use an in-place unit unless it has been approved by the local health department or the Indiana State Department of Health.

**Acceptable Equipment/Alternatives to use:**

- ❖ Hot water sanitizing dishmachines can be used once checked to ensure 180 degrees F minimum final rinse temperature.
- ❖ Direct plumbed coffee makers are allowable, once checked to ensure brewing temperatures of 180 degrees F or above.
- ❖ Instead of using low-temperature/chemical dishmachines, use 3-bay sink with a heat booster set at 170 degrees F OR a chemical sanitizer at 100 ppm of chlorine.

Food establishments may consider the following alternative procedures to minimize water usage:

- ❖ Commercially packaged ice may be substituted for ice made on-site.
- ❖ Single-serve items or disposable utensils may be substituted for reusable dishes and utensils.
- ❖ Prepared foods from approved sources may be used in place of foods requiring complex preparation.
- ❖ Restrict menu choices or hours of operation.
- ❖ Portable toilets may be utilized for sanitary purposes (units should include handsinks with own water source).

Monitor news reports to determine the status of the water supply and to determine if the advisory or notice has been lifted. Once the notice is rescinded, these precautionary measures *must* be followed:

Flush the building water lines and clean faucet screens, water line strainers on mechanical dishwashing machines and similar equipment  
Flush and sanitize all water-using fixtures and appliances of standing water such as ice machines, beverage dispensers, hot water heaters, etc.  
Run one batch of ice from machines that manufacture ice and discard  
Clean and sanitize all fixtures, sinks, and equipment connected to water lines

**NOTES:**

In case of *chemical* contamination of the municipal water supply for a food establishment, the establishment shall immediately cease use of the water supply and contact the local health department. There must be water pressure before resuming operations in a food establishment and the water should be sampled for bacteriological quality.

**The safety of water cannot be judged by color, odor or taste.**

Should there be any questions during water emergency orders regarding appropriate operations at a food establishment, contact your local health department or the Indiana State Department of Health Food Program at (317) 233-7360.

A HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE DOES NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT AT THE ESTABLISHMENT FOR THESE GUIDELINES TO BE IMPLEMENTED. IT IS MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THE ESTABLISHMENT IS OPERATING IN A SAFE MANNER SO AS TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF THE PUBLIC.