

Boil Water Advisory General Information

Use tap water for:

- Laundry
- Showers
- Shaving
- Flushing toilets

Use boil water for:

- Drinking
- Brushing teeth
- Sponge bathing babies
- Making ice
- Washing Vegetables and fruits
- Preparing food and baby formula
- Coffee making
- Pet water bowls

Do not use:

- Any kind of household filter
- Ice makers, soda dispensers or any appliance with a line to the water supply
- Water toys such as wading pools

Frequently asked questions

How do I boil my water during an advisory?

- Fill a pot with water.
- Heat the water until bubbles come from the bottom of the pot to the top.
- Once the water reaches a rolling boil, let it boil for 1 minute.
- Turn off the heat source and let the water cool.
- Pour water into a clean container with a cover for storage.

Why do I have to boil my water?

Your water may be contaminated by bacteria. This may be due to equipment failure, leaking/broken pipes in the system, or insufficient disinfectant in the water supply. The Boil Water Advisory gives you information so you can take action to protect your health.

I cannot boil my water. How do I disinfect my water to make it safe to drink?

NOTE: Water contaminated with fuel or a toxic chemical will not be made safe by boiling or disinfection. Use another source of water if you know or suspect that water might be contaminated with fuel or a toxic chemical.

If tap water is clear:

- Use unscented bleach (bleach that does not have an added scent).
- Add 1/8 teaspoon (8 drops or about 0.75 milliliters) of unscented household liquid bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
- Mix well and wait 30 minutes or more before drinking.
- Store disinfected water in a clean container with a cover.

If tap water is cloudy:

- Filter through a clean cloth
- Use unscented bleach (bleach that does not have an added scent).
- Add 1/4 teaspoon (16 drops or 1.5 milliliters) of unscented household liquid bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
- Mix well and wait 30 minutes or more before drinking.
- Store disinfected water in a clean container with a cover.

Remember that containers may need to be sanitized before using them to store safe water.

To sanitize containers:

- Use unscented bleach (bleach that does not have an added scent).
- Make a sanitizing solution by mixing 1 teaspoon (5 milliliters) of unscented household liquid bleach in 1 quart (32 ounces, 4 cups, or about 1 liter) of water.
- Pour this sanitizing solution into a clean storage container and shake well, making sure that the solution coats the entire inside of the container.
- Let the clean storage container sit at least 30 seconds, and then pour the solution out of the container.

- Let the empty container air dry OR rinse it with clean water that has already been made safe, if available. Never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaners. Open windows and doors to get fresh air when you use bleach.

Should I use bottled water?

You may choose to use bottled water if it is available.

I don't like the taste of boiled water. What can I do?

To improve the taste of boiled water you can:

- Pour cooled boiled water back and forth from one clean glass or container into another to add air to the water, or
- Let the water stand for a few hours, or
- Add a pinch of salt to each quart of boiled water.

What should I do after the boil water advisory is lifted?

- Flush out the building's water pipes to ensure they contain safe water before using them. To do this, turn on one hot water tap and let it run until the water is cold. This will drain the hot water heater and refill it with safe water.
- Then, turn on all your cold water taps, faucets, fountains, shower heads and outside hose spigots and let them run for five minutes.
- Clean faucet screens and aerators on all taps.
- Flush, clean and sanitize water lines on equipment such as beverage machines, coffee machines and ice machines with clean water. Follow manufacturers' instructions.
- Replace, don't just clean water filter cartridges on taps and in water containers.
- Flush, clean and sanitize any other water-using fixture or equipment using manufacturers' instructions.
- Clean and sanitize all food preparation, dispensing and preparation equipment (ex: ice machines, soda fountains, ice cream dispensers) following manufacturers' instructions. This includes any in-line, pre-treatment devices. If you need help or information, contact the company that installed the equipment.
- Clean and sanitize sprayers or misters using manufacturers' instructions.
- Flush and sanitize water treatment devices using manufacturers' instructions. Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle. Replace any water filter cartridges in treatment devices.

Health Canada Information

What are the reasons for issuing boil water advisories or boil water orders?

A boil water advisory may be issued as a result of any of:

1) on evidence of conditions such as:

- unacceptable levels of disease-causing bacteria, viruses or parasites in the water system anywhere from the source to the tap,
- unacceptable levels in the cloudiness (turbidity) in the water at its originating source

These conditions can occur for many reasons including: inadequate filtration and /or disinfection during treatment, re-contamination during distribution,

2) precautionary measure when there is concern that contamination may occur, for example local emergency repairs in the distribution system

A boil water order is usually issued where evidence indicates that the drinking water is or may be responsible for an outbreak of illness.

Is it necessary to boil all water in the home during an advisory or order?

During boil water advisories or boil water orders, you should boil all water used for drinking, preparing food , beverages, ice cubes, washing fruits and vegetables, or brushing teeth. Severely immunocompromised individuals should always boil their tap water for the purposes noted above. Infant formulas should be prepared using boiled tapwater, at all times. In the event that boiling is not practical, your local public health authority or other responsible authority may direct you to disinfect the water using household bleach, or to use an alternative supply known to be safe.

It is not necessary to boil tap water used for other household purposes, such as showering, laundry, bathing, or washing dishes. Adults, teens,

and older children can wash, bathe, or shower; however, they should avoid swallowing the water. Toddlers and infants should be sponge bathed.

How should tap water be boiled properly?

Water should be placed in a heat-resistant container or in an electric kettle without an automatic shut-off and brought to a rolling boil for 1 minute to kill all disease-causing organisms. Water can also be boiled in a microwave oven using a microwave-safe container, but it is advisable to include a glass rod or wooden or plastic stir stick in the container to prevent the formation of superheated water (water heated above its boiling point, without the formation of steam). The water should then be cooled and poured into a clean container or refrigerated until you are ready to use it. At elevations over 2,000 metres water boils at a slightly lower temperature and should therefore be boiled for at least two minutes to kill all disease-causing organisms.

I have a water treatment device, do I still need to boil my drinking water?

If the device is designed to improve the taste and odour or chemical quality of the water, such as activated carbon filters, it is still necessary to boil the water. Devices designed to disinfect the water, such as a UV light units, may be used as an alternative to boiling. If the water is cloudy, filtration may be required before disinfection. Check with the manufacturer if you are not certain.

Are extra precautions necessary during a waterborne outbreak?

In the event of a waterborne disease outbreak, public health or other responsible authorities may advise the public to wash their hands in a dilute solution of unscented household bleach and water (1 millilitre or 20 drops of unscented bleach per litre of water). This is particularly important before preparing or eating meals and after using the toilet, changing diapers, or handling animals. If dishes are washed by hand, they should be washed and rinsed in hot tap water, then soaked in a dilute solution of household bleach (20 millilitres of bleach in 10 litres of water) for 1 minute, and air dried. Dishwashers with a hot water cycle will disinfect dishes. These precautions should reduce the possible spread of illness and minimize the need to boil tap water.

When is a boil water advisory or order lifted?

Boil water advisories or boil water orders are usually lifted by the responsible authority or water utility when the water is considered safe

and no longer poses a threat to public health.

What should I do when the boil water advisory or order has been lifted?

The responsible authority or water utility will provide instructions on flushing water pipes within the home. It is important to carefully follow the instructions provided. Water heaters may need to be disinfected and flushed to remove any contaminated water. Some types of water treatment devices may need to be disinfected or replaced before being used. Check with the manufacturer for details.