

Commonly Asked Questions Following A Boil Water Notice

The following information is provided to answer questions from the public about how they should respond to public boil water advisories issued under the USEPA/OHA advisory rules. Public water systems are required to issue boil water notices under the following circumstances:

Failure of a system to meet microbial standards

Failure of a system to meet treatment or turbidity standards

Failure of a system to adequately disinfect drinking water

Failure of a system to maintain positive pressure in distribution

In some cases the hazards will be more acute than others, but not generically different. The presence of organisms is conclusive evidence of potential harm, lack of disinfectant implies that viable organisms may reach customers, and high turbidity interferes with disinfection which can lead to viable organisms surviving and reaching the customer. When boil water notices are in place, customers need to know what uses they can safely continue, and what uses require boiling of the water before use. Since any of the above scenarios result in inadequately treated water reaching households, our advice about safe uses should be consistent. **Water used for activities that require boiling should be brought to a rolling boil for 1 minute.**

Activities that <u>do</u> require boiled water:	Activities that <u>do not</u> require boiled water:
Drinking	Showering
Washing food served without cooking or baking	Tub bathing
Adding water to food without cooking or baking	Dish washing or rinsing*
Ice making	Laundering
Cleaning food contact surfaces	General cleaning or mopping
Rinsing your mouth or gargling	Hand washing
Eye washing	Pet watering
Taking water with medications	Pet bathing
Tooth brushing	Plant water or irrigation

*Clean dishes and utensils should be rinsed in water that contains 1 tablespoon of household bleach per gallon of water (100-200 ppm chlorine) and allowed to air dry before use.

Home treatment devices that do not boil or chemically disinfect the water with acceptable disinfectants are not considered reliable alternatives to boiling the water.

Note: Facilities licensed by the county health department or Department of Agriculture may have additional sanitary requirements. Check with the appropriate regulatory agency for details.