

# Boil Water Notice Guidance for Food Establishments

When a Boil Water Notice (sometimes called a Boil Water Advisory or Boil Water Order) is issued, all uses of drinkable water in your food establishment will be affected: drinking, food preparation, handwashing, dishwashing, and cleaning and sanitizing food contact equipment and surfaces.

Follow the temporary methods below when a Boil Water Notice is issued. The management team is responsible for making sure these methods are used to protect public health. If you cannot ensure food safety by following these methods, **immediately stop food operations**. Please note that there may be certain situations when you will have to do additional or different temporary methods than what are listed here.

## Alternative Safe Water Sources

You can use water for drinking, food operations, and handwashing from one of the following alternative safe sources:

- Boiled water – water that remains at a rolling boil for at least one minute, then cooled before use.
- Commercially bottled water.
- Hauled water from an approved public water supply in covered, food-grade containers that are clean and sanitized.
- Water from a drinking water hauler that follows the Department of Environmental Conservation's procedure.

Do not use tap water or water from equipment that has been run through a filter. Filters do not remove all contaminants, so food safety cannot be ensured.

## Food Operations

- Prepackaged food can still be served.
- Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator or as part of the cooking process. Do not use tap water.

## Appliances and Equipment

- Throw away ice from icemakers and stop making ice. Use commercially made ice or ice made with water from an alternative safe source.
- Stop use of post-mix machines, auto-fill coffee makers, instant hot water dispensers, and juice and tea dispensers.

## Preparing Food Products Requiring Water

- Prepare food only using water from an alternative safe source.

- Throw away ready-to-eat (RTE) food that may have been prepared with or may have come in contact with non-drinkable water.
- Throw away RTE food items stored with ice or displayed on ice that could have been made from non-drinkable water.

### **Washing or Soaking Fresh Produce**

- Use pre-washed and packaged produce or frozen or canned fruits and vegetables.
- Soak produce in water from an alternative safe source and in a clean, sanitized sink.
- Wash fresh produce with water from an alternative safe source.

### **Handwashing Procedures**

**If you cannot follow any of these alternative handwashing procedures, then you must stop food preparation.** Only prepackaged food may be served.

- Use water from an alternative safe source for handwashing. This is recommended.
- If an alternative safe source is not available, handwashing may be done with tap water and soap. You must thoroughly dry your hands with paper towels, and then use hand sanitizer.

Do not allow bare-hand contact with RTE food. Use physical barriers, such as disposable papers, gloves and utensils, instead.

### **Cleaning Procedures**

#### **Cleaning and Sanitizing Utensils and Tableware**

- Using single-service utensils and tableware is recommended.
- You can use the existing automatic dish washing machines after verifying that they are working properly to reach a water temperature that sanitizes the utensils and tableware, and uses appropriate cleaning agents.

#### **Cleaning the Facility**

- Stop operations if cleanliness of the physical facility could risk food safety.
- You can use non-drinkable water for mopping floors and cleaning other non-food contact surfaces.

### **Returning to Normal Operations**

Follow these steps for returning to normal operations after the Boil Water Notice has been lifted:

- Ensure that cleaning and sanitizing equipment such as dish washing machines for utensils, three-bay sinks, buckets, etc. are clean and sanitized.
- Flush pipes and faucets. Follow directions from your water supplier or run cold water faucets for at least five minutes.
- Flush, clean and sanitize equipment with waterline connections (for example, post-mix beverage machines, spray misters, coffee or tea urns, ice machines, glass washers, dishwashers, and other equipment with water connections) by following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces, utensils and other equipment before use.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.
- Replace filters in equipment such as water chillers or ice machines.