

Frequently Asked Questions:

Boil Advisory or Order

What is the difference between a Boil Order and a Boil Advisory?

A boil water order is issued by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to public water systems when a threat to the public health exists, or is likely to exist, that boiling the water will remedy.

A public water system may issue a boil water advisory as a precautionary measure when there is concern that a problem with drinking water may exist, but it has not yet been confirmed. These are most commonly issued for major water main breaks or other low-pressure events.

What does a boil water notification mean?

It means that water that comes out of the tap should not be used for drinking, brushing your teeth, cooking or washing fruits and vegetables. You should use bottled water or water that has been boiled and cooled for those activities.

What precautions should I take if under a boil water order or advisory?

- Boil water vigorously for three minutes prior to use. Use only water that has been boiled for drinking, diluting fruit juices, all other food preparation and brushing teeth.
- Dispose of ice cubes and do not use ice from a household automatic ice maker. Remake ice cubes with water that has been boiled.
- Disinfect dishes and other food contact surfaces by immersion for at least one minute in clean tap water that contains one teaspoon of unscented household bleach per gallon of water.

Note: Let water cool sufficiently before drinking (approximately 110 degrees F).

Why has the boil water been issued?

The Department of Natural Resources regulations require us to issue boil water notifications when the pressure drops below 20 psi (which can happen when a water pipe is broken).

Can I drink the water?

During a boil order or advisory, only bottled water or water that has been boiled for 3-5 minutes should be consumed or used to wash dishes, wash fruits/vegetables, make ice cubes or brush teeth.

Can I wash my hands in this water?

It's recommended that bottled water or water boiled for 3-5 minutes (and cooled) should be used for hand washing. When this is not practical, it is recommended that if tap water must be used to wash and rinse, it should be followed up with the use of a hand sanitizer. Consuming unsafe water is the most likely way to become ill. Using extra precautions with hand washing ensures that hands are clean for eating.

Can I shower or take a bath in this water?

Yes, it is safe to shower or bathe in the water. The primary concern is that the water not be consumed. Instruct children not to put the water in their mouth when they are bathing. When bathing infants, extra precaution should be taken –it's recommended using bottled water or water that has been boiled for 3-5 minutes and cooled for use.

How do I clean my dishes?

Use bottled water or water that has been boiled for 3-5 minutes and cooled to wash and rinse dishes. Home dishwashers cannot be assured to completely kill organisms that may be in the water.

Can I wash my clothes in the water?

Yes, you may continue to use the water to wash clothes. The major concern is consuming the water.

What do we need to do when the boil water notice is lifted?

When the order or advisory is lifted, you should flush the buildings water lines and clean the faucets screens. Also, purge water-using fixtures and appliances of standing water or ice. This includes changing refrigerator water filters.