

Guidelines During a Boil Advisory

Water service can be interrupted or contaminated for any number of reasons from construction accidents to fire department demands to natural disasters. In general, a Boil Advisory means that **all water to be used for cooking, drinking or cleaning should be brought to a rolling boil for at least five minutes** prior to use and signs posted on equipment to instruct employees of proper safeguards.

If you cannot arrange to have potable (safe) water to cook, clean, serve and wash hands, you must CLOSE until you can put the proper safeguards in place.

The following list outlines safeguards as well as some helpful hints:

1. Drinking water

Use boiled or bottled water. If you use boiled water for drinking, the taste may be improved by transferring the boiled water from container to container to aerate it. Water filtering units may not remove all contaminants.

2. Beverage machines or beverage dispenser “guns” connected to waterlines

Shut off water to the machines and post signs. It is best to buy prepackaged products for consumer use. Flush the lines on beverage machines thoroughly after the advisory is lifted. Sanitize lines if necessary

3. Ice machines

Turn off the water and circuit breaker to the ice machine. Discard all ice made after the boil advisory was issued. Buy bagged ice from approved supplier.

4. Preparing or cooking foods

Use boiled or bottled water only. Throw away all food that may have been prepared during the boil advisory.

5. Washing produce / produce sprayers

Use only boiled or bottled water to wash produce. Disconnect all produce sprayers in retail areas. Consider using bagged pre-washed ready to eat produce, frozen or canned produce. Flush the lines of the produce sprayers thoroughly after the advisory is lifted.

6. Handwashing for employees and the public

Use boiled, bottled or potable water from an alternative source. A temporary hand wash station may be set up by using a large urn or thermos, with a spout, full of hot water.

7. Cleaning and sanitizing of equipment

Use boiled water for all compartments of a three compartment sink. Do not use dish machines. Sanitize all food contact surfaces and equipment after Boil Advisory is lifted.

8. Dipper wells

Turn off water and post signs.

After the boil advisory is lifted by the water department:

- Flush the building’s water lines for at least two minutes
- Clean faucet screens
- Clean the water line strainers on mechanical dishwashing machines
- Purge all water-using fixtures and appliances of standing water
- Clean and sanitize all fixtures, sinks, and equipment connected to the waterlines.

If you have questions, call Columbus Public Health’s Food Protection Program at 614-645-7005.