

Boil Water Advisory

Healthcare Institutions and Childcare Programs

Follow these general guidelines during a boil water advisory. In some cases there may be additional requirements.

Ensuring Safe Water

During the boil water advisory, all the water you provide to your clients must be safe.

- Boil the water. Tap water should be brought to a rapid, rolling boil for one minute. Cool the water and place it in clean, sanitized, and covered containers. Use immediately or refrigerate for later use. Commercially bottled water may be used as an alternative.
- Post signs at all sinks to tell clients and staff not to drink the water.
- Shut off drinking water fountains.
- Provide bottled water or cooled, boiled water for drinking, making infant formula, making juices, and tooth brushing.
- For detailed food service instructions, refer to the fact sheet, *Boil Water Advisory Food Establishments*.

Handwashing

Tap water can be used for handwashing.

- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Dry with paper towels.
- After washing, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 70% alcohol.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Continue with normal cleaning and disinfecting practices. If bleach is used, mix fresh daily. **Always use test strips to verify concentration of disinfectant.**

Laundry

Continue to do laundry as usual.

Bathing and Showering

Adults and older children can bathe, providing they don't swallow the water. Toddlers, infants, and assisted adults should be sponge bathed to ensure they don't drink the water.

Water Play

Tap water is not safe for use in sensory play or for filling wading pools. Cancel any water-based play activities for the duration of the boil water advisory.

Preventing Spread of Infection

Employees with diarrhea must remain off work until they are free of symptoms for 24 hours. Children recovering from diarrhea are not to return to the childcare program until they are free of symptoms for 24 hours.

After the Boil Water Advisory Is Lifted

- Run cold water faucets and drinking fountains for at least one minute before using water.
- Ensure that appliances with water line connections, like refrigerators with water and ice dispensers, are flushed and sanitized according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Change all carbon filters connected to water devices; for example under counter, refrigeration units or jug style filters.
- Run water softeners through one regeneration cycle.
- In cases of flooding or contamination of sewage, drain and refill hot water heaters if they were set below 45°C.

Updated June 2023