

Boil Water Orders

When water supplies are compromised, boil water orders for tap water may be issued by the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) to local public water suppliers and the public. Boil water orders are preventative measures issued to protect public health from waterborne infectious agents that could be or are known to be present in drinking water.

When a boil order is issued to the local public water supplier, the supplier notifies its customers, takes corrective measures, monitors the water supply, and notifies customers when it has remedied the problem and the boil water order is lifted. The water supplier will have information available on these topics. Other sources of information will be state and local government officials and departments, and the media.

*Bottled water can be used in lieu of boiled water,
but if water is obtained from the tap, it must be boiled to ensure safety!*

Homeowners using drinking water from a city or other public water system

Listen for public announcements regarding the safety of your water supply.

Drinking contaminated water can cause illness

If you become ill after drinking contaminated water, you should seek medical attention. The usual symptoms of illness from drinking unsafe water include upset stomach, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, cramps and headaches. Children (especially infants), the elderly, and those who have existing health conditions or severely compromised immune systems are at greater risk of developing complications; it is important that they receive medical care if symptoms become worse or do not improve.

How to Boil Water

Boiling is the surest method to make water safer to drink by killing disease-causing organisms, including viruses, bacteria and parasites. Bring the water to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute before using it hot (making coffee, etc.), or it cool before use. The taste of boiled water can be improved by pouring it from one container to another and then allowing it to stand for a few hours, or by adding a pinch of salt for each quart or liter of boiled water.

If the water is cloudy

- Filter it through a clean cloth, paper towel, or coffee filter OR allow it to settle
- Draw off the clear water
- Bring the clear water to a rolling boil for one minute
- Let the boiled water cool
- Store the boiled water in clean sanitized containers with tight covers

If the water is clear

- Bring the clear water to a rolling boil for one minute
- Let the boiled water cool
- Store the boiled water in clean sanitized containers with tight covers

General Precautions

- **DISCARD** any ice, juice, formula, stored water and uncooked foods that were prepared with tap water during the period of concern.
- **USE WATER that is safe (bottled or boiled)** for drinking, food preparation, making ice, washing food, manual utensil and equipment washing, rinsing and sanitizing, brushing teeth or any other activity involving the consumption of water. Because of special concerns with infants, baby formula that requires water should be made with only **bottled** water.
- **CHILD CARE CENTERS AND SCHOOLS** should use only **bottled** water for mixing infant formula, and use only safe water for hand washing, and for mixing sanitizing solutions for diapering areas and surfaces such as tabletops and toys. Adult employees should use a hand sanitizer after washing hands with tap water and soap. Do not use drinking fountains and discontinue the use of water play tables.
- **SWIMMING POOLS, HOT TUBS, AND SPAS** that are operated properly, including routine monitoring for adequate disinfection levels, may continue to operate.
- **RESTAURANTS** are strongly encouraged to use single-service disposable dishes and eating utensils, or to follow the washing instructions below.

Washing Dishes

You may use a dishwasher if it has a sanitizing cycle. If it does not have a sanitizing cycle, or you are not sure if it does, you may hand wash dishes and utensils by following these steps:

- Wash the dishes as you normally would.
- As a final step, immerse the dishes for at least one minute in lukewarm water to which a teaspoon of bleach per gallon of water has been added.
- Allow the dishes to completely air dry.
- You may also use boiled and cooled water or bottled water.

Bathing and Showering

Young children should be given sponge baths rather than put in a bathtub where they might ingest the tap water. Adults or children should take care not to swallow water when showering.

Brushing your Teeth

Use only bottled or boiled water for brushing your teeth.

Ice

Ice cubes are not safe unless made with bottled or boiled water. The freezing process does not kill the bacteria or other microorganisms.

Washing Fruit and Vegetables

Use only bottled or boiled water to wash fruits and vegetables that are to be eaten raw.

Hand Washing

Wash your hands with soap and boiled water, or soap with bottled water. If only tap water is available, it is best to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after you wash your hands. If neither is possible and your hands have been exposed to germs, such as after using the bathroom, washing with warm tap water and soap and thoroughly drying your hands is much better than not washing them at all. In these instances, try to keep your hands away from your mouth and use a hand sanitizer as soon as possible after you're done.

Cooking

Bring water to a rolling boil for 1 minute before adding food.

Infants

Use only bottled water for formula that requires added water, or use only prepared canned baby formula that is not condensed and does not require added water.

Houseplants and Gardens

Water can be used without treatment for watering household plants and garden plants. The exception would be things like strawberries or tomatoes where the water would contact the edible fruit.

House Pets

The same precautions taken to protect humans should be applied to pets. Aquatic organisms (e.g. fish) should not be exposed to water containing elevated levels of bacteria. If the organism's water needs to be refreshed use appropriately boiled or bottled water.

Flush All Taps When Water Service Has Been Restored

Flushing the water system once service is restored is important because it will remove contaminants that are in the system because of the problem that was encountered.

When flushing, it is important to carefully follow the instructions provided by your water supplier or local or state public health officials. Flush your household and building water lines including: interior and exterior faucets, showers, water/ice dispensers, water treatment units, etc. Water heaters may need to be flushed to remove any contaminated water. Some types of water treatment devices may need to be disinfected or replaced before being used. Check with the manufacturer for details.

Do not resume normal use of water until advised by your water supplier that it is safe to do so.

Other resources are available at:

CDC's Make Water Safe Flyer: http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/emergency/09_202278-B_Make_Water_Safe_Flyer_508.pdf

CDC's Drink Safe Water Flyer: http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/emergency/09_202278-A_Drink_Safe_Water_Flyer_508.pdf

CDC's general information on safe drinking water:

http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/safe_water/index.html