



Boil Water Notice

Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why was I advised to Boil My Water?

A: You may be asked to boil your tap water during an emergency or other situation, such as:

- A water main break or repairs;
- If the water pressure drops due to equipment failure or power outages;
- If tests show that potentially harmful microorganisms may be present in the water;
- If the water source has been flooded; or
- During other situations that warrant special action to protect the public's health.

Q: How does boiling make my tap water safe?

A: Boiling the water kills microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, or protozoans that can cause disease. Boiling makes the tap water microbiologically safe.

Q: How long should I boil the water?

A: Bring tap water to a full rolling boil, let it boil for one minute, and let it cool before using.

Q: Can I boil water in the microwave?

A: Tap water can be boiled in the microwave in a microwave-safe container, provided the water reaches a full rolling boil for one minute. Place a microwave-safe utensil in the container to keep the water from superheating (heating above the boiling point without steam or bubbles.)



Q: Do I have to boil the tap water used to make beverages?

A: Yes. Boil all water used for making coffee, tea, mixed drinks, kool-aid or any other beverage. Also water being used to make ice should be boiled.

Q: Should I boil the water used to make baby formula?

A: Yes. Only use boiled tap water or bottled water for mixing baby formula.

Q: Do I need to boil water to wash my raw vegetables before eating?

A: Yes. Boil all the tap water used to wash raw vegetables.

Q: Should I boil the tap water used for cooking?

A: All the tap water used in the cooking process should be boiled for one minute, unless the cooking process involves boiling for one minute or more.

Q: Do I have to boil my dish washing water?

A: No. Adding a tablespoon of unscented, household bleach, such as Clorox, to a sink full of tap water should be sufficient to treat the water used for washing dishes. Bleach should also be used in water being used to rinse the dishes. Allow dishes and utensils to air dry before re-use. You may use a dishwasher to wash dishes as long as it is used on the hot water cycle. After washing dishes in a dishwasher, they should be rinsed in water with a tablespoon of bleach added, and allowed to air dry before re-use.

Q: Should I boil the water before brushing my teeth?

A: Yes. Any tap water that might be swallowed should be boiled before use.



Q: Is it necessary to boil water to wash my hands? Is any special soap needed?

A: Yes. It is necessary to boil the water used for washing hands. No special soap has to be used.

Q: Do I need to boil water for bathing?

A: Yes. It is recommended that you boil water for bathing or showering. If you do not boil the water for bathing or showering, care should be taken not to get any water in the mouth or swallowing the water. Infants or toddlers should be sponge bathed with boiled water which has been allowed to cool. No special soaps are necessary. Care should be taken to prevent tap water which has not been boiled from getting into deep open or post-surgical wounds. Consult your physician or health care provider for wound care instructions.

Q: Do I need to use boiled water for washing clothes or flushing the toilet?

A: No

Q: Do I have to boil tap water if I have a treatment device?

A: Yes. Devices designed to improve the taste, odor, or chemical quality of the water, such as activated carbon filters, will not remove harmful microorganisms. Boil the tap water to make sure it is safe.

Q: Can I use bottled water instead of boiling tap water?

A: Yes. Bottled water can be used in all situations where boiling water is recommended in this document.

Q: Should I boil the tap water I give my animals or pets?

A: You can boil the tap water you give the animals in your care. Your veterinarian can tell you if this precaution is necessary.



Page | 4

Q: What should I do if I become sick?

A: See your family physician or healthcare provider, the same as you would normally. Your doctor may call the West Virginia Office of Environmental Health Services (304) 558-2981 for information about the boil water notice. Your doctor should notify the local health department if he or she suspects your illness was caused by microorganisms in the water.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants. People with weakened immune systems, such as people with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, organ transplant patients, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be at greater risk of infections. These people should seek advice, about drinking tap water, from their health care providers.

Guidelines on ways to reduce the risk of infection from microbiological contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

Q: How will I know when it is safe to drink my tap water?

A: You will be notified when tests show that the tap water is safe to drink. You may be asked to run the water to flush the pipes in the home before using your tap water or be given other special instructions. Until you are notified, continue to boil all tap water for one minute before use.