

Boil Water Advisories Frequently Asked Questions for Restaurants, Child Care Centers, Local Confinement, Residential Cares, and Institutions:

What is a Boil Water Advisory?

Whenever a water system has a significant pressure loss or a coliform bacteria test result, as a precaution, customers in the affected area are advised to boil water to insure its safety until testing can confirm it's safe to use. While there's been no confirmation of contamination, this advisory is a recommended precaution.

Should I be using ice from my ice machine?

It is recommended to use ice from an alternate source. This means ice purchased from a vendor that is not in the affected area of the boil water advisory.

Can I still use my dish machine or hand wash my utensils in my three compartment sink?

There are a couple of recommendations for utensil washing during a boil water advisory such as:

- Switch to paper/single service utensils during the advisory period
- Dish machines may be continued in use provided heat or chemical sanitizing is working at all times
- Hand washing utensils may be continued in use provided heat or chemical sanitizing is working at all times.
- Chemical sanitizing shall be maintained with Chlorine at 50-100ppm, Quaternary Ammonia 200-400ppm. Dish machines in accordance with data plate. Hand washing at least 2 minutes contact time for immersion
- Heat sanitizing:
 - For dish machine operations, cycles shall be in accordance with the data plate with the utensil surface reaching 160°F minimally
 - For hand dishwashing, the third compartment of the set up shall be at least 170°F for a minimum of 1 minute immersion at all times utensils are being washed.

Can I wash my hands during a boil water advisory?

Yes, vigorous handwashing with soap and your tap water is safe for basic personal hygiene. However, if you are washing your hands to prepare food, you should use boiled (then cooled) water, disinfected or bottled water with handwashing soap. The recommendation is to properly wash your hands (using a boiled water hand wash station set up), use a hand sanitizer, and have no bare hand contact (use gloves, utensils, or deli paper) for Ready to Eat foods. There should be no bare hand contact of Ready to Eat foods occurring during all and regular periods of food preparation and serving.





Is it okay to make beverages with the water?

It is recommended that water for consumption or for food preparation be boiled or from an alternate source, such as bottled water. When using for human consumption such as drinking, cooking, and making ice, water should be boiled 1 minute (after water begins to boil). Self-service beverage or post mix fountain equipment should not be in service.

How should I handle fresh produce?

It is recommended to use pre-washed packaged produce, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables that do not require washing. Produce which has been washed prior to the advisory and that will be cooked to a temperature of 145°F are acceptable to prepare and serve. For establishments which have produce misters, misters should not be in service during the advisory.

What should I do after the advisory is lifted?

Follow the advice or guidance of the water utility. These include direction on flushing pipes and faucets for at least 5 minutes.

- Equipment with water line connections such as post mix beverage machines, spray misters, coffee or tea urns, ice machines, glass washers, dishwashers, and other equipment must be flushed, cleaned and sanitized in accordance to manufacturer's instructions.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.
- Drain reservoirs in tall buildings.
- Flush drinking fountains; run continuously for 5 minutes.

For ice machines:

- Flush the water line.
- Close the valve on the water line behind the machine disconnect the water line from the machine inlet.
- Open the valve.
- Run 5 gallons of water through the valve and dispose of the water.
- Close valve.
- Reconnect water line.
- Open the valve.
- Flush the water lines in the machine.
- Turn on the machine.
- Make ice for 1 hour and dispose of the first batch of ice.
- Clean and sanitize all parts and surfaces that come in contact with water and ice, follow manufacturer's instructions

**Questions? Call Environmental Health at 919-245-2360.
www.orangecountync.gov/health**