

# BOIL WATER ADVISORIES

Answers to frequently asked questions



INDIANA  
AMERICAN WATER

## What is a boil water advisory?

A boil water advisory is a public notification advising customers to boil tap water before consuming it. Advisories are issued when:

- an event has occurred with the potential to adversely affect water quality.
- a situation has occurred where there is known degradation of the water quality.

There are two types: precautionary and mandatory.

### Precautionary boil water advisory

Issued when the water system experiences a loss in positive water pressure (below 20 psi), typically due to a serious main break or low storage tank levels. A loss of positive water pressure indicates the existence of conditions that could allow contamination to enter the distribution system. This is the most common type of advisory, which is issued as a precaution until water samples are collected and analyzed to confirm that water quality has not been affected.

### Mandatory boil water order

Issued when contamination is **confirmed** in the water system. Customers are instructed to boil the water to kill bacteria and other organisms in the water, until the issue is resolved and the notice can be lifted. Contamination from organisms, such as bacteria, viruses and parasites, can cause symptoms, including nausea, cramps, diarrhea and associated headaches.



## What actions do I need to take?

If notified of a boil water advisory, **DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT BOILING IT FIRST.** Bring all water to a rolling boil, let it boil for three minutes, and cool before using—or use bottled water. You should use boiled or bottled water for drinking, making ice, washing dishes, brushing teeth and food preparation until the advisory has been lifted.

### We also recommend the following steps:

- Throw away uncooked food or beverages or ice cubes if made with tap water during the day of the advisory.
- Keep boiled water in the refrigerator for drinking.
- Do not swallow water while you are showering or bathing.
- Provide pets with boiled water after cooling.

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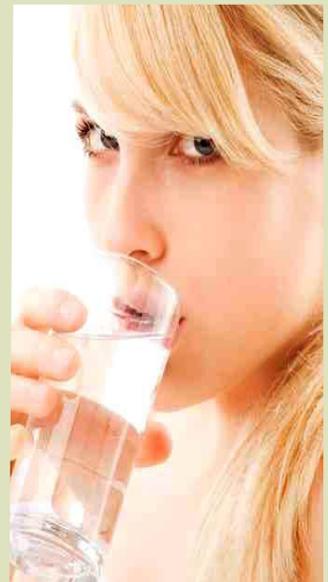


## For more information

Contact our Customer Service Center at (800) 492-8373

## For more information on drinking water standards

Contact the EPA Hotline at 1-800-426-4791



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## What actions do I need to take? (continued)

- Do not use home filtering devices in place of boiling or using bottled water. Most home water filters will not provide adequate protection from microorganisms.
- Use only boiled water to treat minor injuries. When showering or bathing, avoid allowing the water to come in contact with an open wound.
- Do not wash salad items with tap water during the period. Use bottled water or freshly boiled and cooled tap water.

## When is a boil water advisory lifted?

According to Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) guidelines, water samples must be collected to test for bacteria in the distribution system. Samples are taken when the issue (e.g. main break) has been corrected. The process typically takes 18 - 24 hours for test results to come back from the laboratory,

You will be notified either by door-to-door delivery of notices or through media or other means when a boil advisory or order is issued and when the notice is expected to expire. Please monitor local media for updates or contact our call center if you have questions.

You may also check the company's website or Facebook page for additional information.

## What should I do once the advisory is lifted?

### Precautionary boil water advisory

Customers under a precautionary boil water advisory can resume normal water usage when the notice is lifted without taking additional measures. If you experience cloudy or discolored water, you should run your faucets for a few minutes until the water runs clear.

### Mandatory boil water order

In the event of a mandatory boil water order, you should flush household pipes, ice makers, water fountains, etc. prior to using for drinking or cooking. Flushing simply means letting the water run to ensure that no contaminated water remains in your pipes. Follow these guidelines for flushing:

- Run all cold water faucets in your home for one minute at one time with the highest water flow possible to prevent splashing or flooding of the drains.
- To flush automatic ice makers, make three batches of ice and discard.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines specified in the owner's manual.
- Run drinking water fountains for one minute at the highest flow rate possible.
- Change refrigerator filters.

## When a boil water is in effect, can I use the water for...?

<b>Showering and bathing</b>	Yes. Just be careful to not the drink the water while you shower or bathe.
<b>Washing dishes</b>	You should NOT use the dishwasher, because the water temperature doesn't reach the boiling point. Dishes should be hand-washed with water that has been boiled first. Or, you can use hot, soapy water and add one tablespoon of bleach per gallon as a precaution, and rinse dishes in cooled water that has been boiled first.
<b>Laundry</b>	Yes, it is OK to do laundry.

## What if...

<b>I have a filter system on my faucet or refrigerator?</b>	Most point-of-use filters are designed to improve the aesthetics of water (improve taste and odor), and not to remove harmful bacteria. You can learn about the capability of your filter by contacting the manufacturer. If in doubt, you should boil your water or use bottled water even if you have a filtering system.
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