



Boil Water Advisory Consumer Information

October 2018

General Information about Boil Water Advisories

The boil water advisory (BWA) or boil water order (BWO) process is initiated when a public water supply system (PWS) notifies KDHE of a circumstance that may pose a threat to public health. At the time of this notification KDHE in consultation with the PWS will determine if bacteriological contamination is present or if a threat of contamination exists. If presence of contamination is confirmed KDHE will issue a BWO. If the potential for contamination is present (not confirmed), either KDHE or the PWS can issue a BWA.

Below are general precautions KDHE recommends you take when a BWA or BWO has been issued for your water system:

- **Discard** any ice, juice, formula, stored water and uncooked foods that were prepared with tap water during the period of concern.
- **Use boiled or bottled water** for drinking, food preparation, mixing baby formula, making ice, washing food, manual utensil and equipment washing, rinsing and sanitizing, brushing teeth or any other activity involving the consumption of water.
- **Child care centers and schools** should use only bottled or boiled water for mixing infant formula, 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.
- **Restaurants and other food establishments** that have questions about the impact of the boil water advisory on their business can contact the Kansas Department of Agriculture's food safety & lodging program at kda.fsl@ks.gov or call 785-564-6767.
- **Swimming pools, hot tubs, and spas** that are operated properly, including routine monitoring for adequate disinfection levels, may continue to operate.
- **Share this information** with all other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, visitors). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.
- **Translate the precautions** for anyone who does not understand English.

Water Use During a BWA or BWO

- **Drinking water during a boil order:** If the water appears discolored, run the cold water tap until water is clear. If water is still discolored after running the tap for several minutes use an alternate source for drinking and food preparation. If water is clear, boil water for one minute prior to drinking or food preparation.
- **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:
 1. Wash the dishes as you normally would.
 2. As a final step, immerse the dishes for at least one minute in lukewarm water to which a teaspoon of unscented bleach per gallon of water has been added.
 3. Allow the dishes to completely air dry.
 4. You may also use boiled and cooled water or bottled water.

- **Bathing and Showering:** Water used for bathing does not generally need to be boiled. Supervision of children is necessary while bathing so that water is not ingested. Persons with cuts or severe rashes may wish to consult their physicians.
- **Brushing your Teeth:** Use only disinfected, boiled, or bottled water for brushing your teeth.
- **Ice:** Ice cubes are not safe unless made with disinfected, boiled, or bottled water. The freezing process does not kill the bacteria or other microorganisms.
- **Washing Fruit and Vegetables:** Use only disinfected, boiled, or bottled water to wash fruits and vegetables that are to be eaten raw.
- **Hand Washing:** You should 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:** For infants use only prepared canned baby formula that is not condensed and does not require added water. Do not use powdered formulas prepared with contaminated 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.