

Boil Water Notices

Checklist for Residents and Homeowners

If you have been advised to boil the tap water in your home or apartment, here are steps that will help you protect yourself and your family. Your local Health Department may provide additional advice on steps you should take. In the event of a “Do Not Use” notice, additional precautions will be needed and you should contact your local Health Department for appropriate guidance.

Drinks and Beverage Preparation

- Do not drink or serve tap water, ice (see food preparation), or beverages made from tap water without following the steps below. Avoid getting tap water in your mouth.
- Use boiled (then cooled) tap water or water from a safe alternate source* to drink or to make beverages, baby formula, soup, ice, etc.
- Prepare water by carefully bringing it to a full **ROLLING BOIL** for **ONE MINUTE**. Be sure to **COOL BEFORE USE**. This may take 20 or 30 minutes, so plan ahead.
- Make sure everyone in the household knows not to use or drink tap water. If necessary, tape notes on sinks, countertops and mirrors to help everyone remember.
- Pour out containers of tap water or beverages recently made with tap water.
- Do not consume ice that was recently made with tap water or use it in beverages.

Food and Food Preparation

- Do not use tap water to prepare, wash, or chill food; or to wash equipment and food contact surfaces (cutting boards, counter tops, utensils, plates, etc.). Instead, use boiled tap water, bottled water, or water from a safe alternate source*.
- Use tap water to cook food, make ice, or wash produce and uncooked foods only if the water has been boiled for 1 minute before use. See hand washing bullet.
- Discard food that may have been prepared with unboiled tap water.
- Avoid consuming ice or using ice made or mixed with ice that was made during the boil water event. For long term events, questionable ice can be used to cool food and drinks if it does not contact the food or drink. Otherwise, discard questionable ice. If you need ice, make new ice in disinfected trays (not ice makers) using boiled or bottled water, or use pre-packaged ice from an alternate source*.
- Hand wash dishes, cutlery, pots, and pans with tap water if you rinse with a disinfectant solution (1 tablespoon of regular unscented bleach per gallon of water). Allow items to completely air dry before use.
- Rely on automatic dishwashers only if the hot wash water or rinse is at least 170° F and includes a full dry cycle. Not all dishwashers reach this temperature so consider rinsing items in disinfectant solution and air dry as described for hand washed dishes.

Washing and Hygiene

- Do not brush teeth with tap water; avoid getting in mouth, open wounds or sores.
- Wash hands for personal hygiene with tap water and a good scrub with soap. To wash your hands for food preparation, use boiled (then cooled) water, bottled water, or water from another acceptable source. Antimicrobial products that do not require water should not be relied on by themselves.
- Healthy individuals may bathe and shave with tap water if you can avoid nicking yourself and ingesting water. People with open cuts, blisters, recent surgical wounds, chronic illness, or are immunocompromised should use boiled (then cooled) water, bottled water or water from an acceptable alternate source.
- When bathing and washing children or disabled individuals, supervise them closely to make sure water is not ingested. Sponge bathing is advisable, and bathing time should be minimized to further reduce the potential for ingestion.
- Clothes can be washed with tap water, but make sure they are completely dried before wearing. Check the water first, discolored water during a boil water event may stain clothes.

After the Boil Water Event

- Eliminate the potential for recontamination by flushing household plumbing and equipment that was in direct contact with tap water or that was recently used with tap water.
- Flush all water lines for at least 5 minutes each. If your service connection is long or complex (like an apartment building), consider flushing for a longer period. Your building superintendent or landlord should be able to advise you on longer flushing times.
- Flush all food or beverage equipment that may have come into contact with tap water, such as beverage machines, coffee makers, dishwashers, refrigerator taps and ice makers. Check manufacturer's recommendations to see if they provide a disinfection procedure. Run equipment for a full cycle and flush to waste.
- Clean sinks, counters, and food contact surfaces with a disinfectant solution (see food section).
- Wash and disinfect ice cube trays and bins. For ice makers; flush by making and discarding three batches of ice cubes, then wipe down the ice bin with a disinfectant. If the water feed line to the ice maker is longer than 20 feet, increase to five batches.
- Tanks, treatment devices and appliances that hold water should be flushed. Run enough water to completely replace at least one full volume of all lines, hot water tanks, pressure tanks, etc. Water filters should have their filter media backwashed or replaced per the manufacturer's recommendations. Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.

*Good alternate water sources include bottled water, water from another public water supply, water from a tanker provided by an emergency response agency, and water delivered by a NY State certified bulk water provider. Roadside springs are **not** a sure source of safe drinking water.

More detailed information for residents and homeowners is available from the New York State Department of Health or from your local Health Department.