

Water Interruption Fact Sheet

1. What is the difference between water interruption and a Boil Advisory?

Water interruption means any anticipated and unanticipated interruptions in the supply of potable water. Anticipated water interruptions include routine or scheduled maintenance on the pump or plumbing of the water supply system. Unanticipated interruptions include plumbing failure, fire department demands, supply contamination or system failure due to accidents or natural disasters.

A Boil Water Advisory is generally issued by water purveyors during a potential or demonstrated microbial contamination (bacteria, virus, protozoa, and parasites), microbial level exceeding EPA standards, low/loss of pressure, natural disaster (e.g., flooding, hurricanes).

2. Can I continue food service during water interruption?

A sufficient supply of potable water is necessary in a food service operation for handwashing, food preparation, equipment cleaning and sanitizing, and other food service activities. You may either,

- Temporarily cease the operation; or
- Obtain a temporary supply of clean potable water from an approved source (e.g., from tank trucks, or bottled water)

Food establishments need to examine on a case-by-case basis and consider the operation's dependency on water (e.g. menu), the anticipated duration of water interruption, and the availability of alternate supplies (e.g. clean potable water, single use kitchenware, single serve table ware) and other resources while choosing one of the options listed above.

(Caution: In the case of non-biological contamination of your public water supply, the facility shall immediately cease use of the water supply and contact CCPH.)

3. How can I handle handwashing during water interruption?

Clean potable water from an approved public water supply system can be heated and placed into a 5 gallon insulated container with a spigot which can be turned on to allow clean, warm water to flow over one's hands into a sink drain.

4. Can I use my coffee maker, ice machine or water or soda dispenser?

Do not use water from any appliance connected to your water line. Disconnect the equipment with water connection and this includes but not limited to: ice machines, direct plumbed tea and coffeemakers, spray misters, beverage machines.

5. During water interruptions there is no water to flush toilets and urinals. How can I safely operate my facility?

Toilet rooms and/or portable toilets with adequate hand washing facilities accessible to employees during all hours of operation may be used until water service is restored. If toilet facilities are not available consider temporarily ceasing the operation.

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6. What should I do about preparing food and beverages? How should I wash fruits, vegetables and food preparation surfaces?

Optional procedures for some of the food operations are listed below:

Food Thawing:

- Thaw only in refrigerator or as part of the cooking process

Washing of produce:

- Obtain and use prewashed packaged produce
- Use produce washed prior to interruption
- Use frozen/canned produce
- Wash fresh produce with potable water from an alternative approved source

Cooking – Food Preparation

- Restrict the menu to items that don't require water
- Use prepared food from an alternate approved source (e.g. deli meat)
- Use clean potable water from an alternate approved source to prepare food
- Use commercially packaged ice or make ice using clean potable water
- Use clean potable water to make coffee

Cleaning and Sanitizing of Equipment, Utensils, Tableware and Facility

- Consider using single service articles for serving food
- Clean and sanitize equipment/utensils/tableware using clean potable water

7. Can I use tap water during a Boil Water Advisory?

During a Boil Water Advisory do not use the tap water that has not been disinfected for drinking, cooking purposes, hand washing, or ware-washing as well as any other purpose that requires the usage of potable water. If food or beverages have been made with water under Boil Water Advisory, discard them.

(Caution: Water contaminated with fuel or toxic chemical will not be made safe by boiling or disinfection. Use another source of water if you know or suspect that water might be contaminated with fuel or a toxic chemical.)

8. How do I disinfect the tap water during a Boil Water Advisory?

You can either boil or use chlorine to disinfect your water.

9. How do I boil the water during a Boil Water Advisory?

- Bring the water to a full boil for at least 5 minutes.
- Cool and aerate the boiled water by pouring it through the air from one container to another, or mixing rapidly with a clean utensil (aeration will reduce the flat taste caused by boiling).

10. I cannot boil the water, how do I disinfect using chlorine?

If tap water is clear:

- Use unscented chlorine bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite with no additional active ingredients).

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- Add 1/8 teaspoon (8 drops or about 0.75 milliliters) of unscented household liquid bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
- Mix well and wait 30 minutes or more before drinking.
- Store disinfected water in a clean container with a cover.

If tap water is cloudy:

- Use unscented chlorine bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite with no additional active ingredients).
- Add 1/4 teaspoon (16 drops or 1.5 milliliters) of unscented household liquid bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
- Mix well and wait 30 minutes or more before drinking.
- Store disinfected water in a clean container with a cover.

Things to consider while returning to normal operation

- Clean and sanitize equipment that is used to clean and sanitize other items before use.
- Make sure equipment with water line connections (filters, post mix beverage machines, spray misters, ice machines, coffee and tea urns, glass washers, dishwashers) is flushed, cleaned, and sanitized according to manufacturer's instructions. Discard first 3 batches of ice.
- Managers of large buildings with water-holding reservoirs should consult their facility engineer and Clermont County Public Health about draining the reservoir.
- Flush pipes and faucets. Run cold water faucets continuously for at least five minutes.
- Flush drinking fountains. Run water for at least five minutes.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.
- Change all point-of-entry and point-of-use water filters, including those associated with equipment which uses water.

Important: There must be water pressure before resuming normal operations in a food operation.