

About These Notices

Individual water systems issue **precautionary** boil-water alerts when water pressure is lost. Water systems are responsible for notifying their customers directly using whatever means necessary when such a self-imposed boil-water alert is issued.

When water testing by the MSDH Public Health Laboratory indicates problems related to water quality, MSDH immediately sends a **state-issued** boil-water alert to the public via press release and this website. The local water system is again responsible for notifying customers directly.

In addition to posting state-issued alerts on this site, MSDH will post self-imposed alerts if properly notified by water system officials. MSDH will issue press releases to radio, television, and newspaper in the affected area to supplement the public notification efforts of the water system.

Bureau of Public Water Supply: 601-576-7518

If you are under a boil-water notice

- Do **not** drink tap water.
- Do **not** use ice made from recent tap water.
- Do **not** use tap water to make drinks, juices, or fountain soft drinks.
- Cook with tap water **ONLY** if food is boiled for at least one minute.

- **Wash dishes**, fruits and vegetables in boiled water or water that has been disinfected with bleach. Using your home dishwasher is not recommended.
- **Brush your teeth** with boiled or bottled water.
- Wash your hands and **bathe as usual**. Bathing is safe as long as no water is swallowed.
- **Wash laundry as usual**. Laundry washed in hot or cold water is safe.

Disinfecting Water

- **Bring water to a rolling boil for 1 minute to kill most organisms.**
- **If you cannot boil your water**, mix eight drops (1/8 teaspoon) of unscented, ordinary household chlorine bleach (5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite) per gallon of water. Mix the solution thoroughly, and let stand for about 30 minutes. (This treatment will kill bacteria, but not parasitic organisms.) If water is muddy or cloudy, remove sediment by straining it through a cloth or filter paper before disinfecting.
- Alternatively, water may be treated with chlorine or iodine tablets.

If you cannot boil your water, mix eight drops (1/8 teaspoon) of unscented, ordinary household chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Mix the solution thoroughly, and let stand for about 30 minutes before using.

When your boil-water notice is lifted:

- **Flush faucets** for a total of 10 minutes to introduce system water throughout house plumbing.

Example:

- 1 faucet — run for 10 minutes
- 2 faucets — run both for 5 minutes
- 3 faucets — run each for 3-4 minutes

Flush any faucet **a minimum of 2 minutes** to ensure clearing of the line serving the faucet.

- **Discard any drinks**, ice, food, etc, made during the boil water notice.
- **Rewash** any food or drink contact items (knives, forks, plates, etc.) with cleared system water.
- **Check water filters** (in faucets, refrigerators and elsewhere) and replace if necessary.
- **Do not use water from your hot water heater** for drinking until several exchanges of the tank have occurred.
- **Run dishwasher** through a cycle or two before washing dishes.

Question and Answers

What if my water system loses pressure?

If water systems lose pressure, MSDH or the water system will issue a boil water notice. However, if you notice a loss of water pressure, you should boil your drinking water until you have been notified your water is safe. Bringing water to a rolling boil for one minute will kill most organisms. MSDH will test water samples collected from water supply systems and must have two consecutive days of clear test samples. Typically, it takes a minimum of 48 to 72 hours to find out whether water is safe to drink from contaminated water supply systems.

Can I bathe and shave with water?

The water may be used for showering, baths, shaving or washing, as long as one does not swallow the water or allow it in the eyes or mouth. Parents should supervise children to make sure water is not ingested, and caregivers should supervise disabled individuals for the same reason. Those with recent surgical wounds, who have a chronic illness or are immunosuppressed should consider using bottled or boiled water for bathing until their boil water notice is lifted.

Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food or make ice. Make sure to boil or disinfect water before use (see above). Drink only bottled, boiled or disinfected water until your water supply system is tested and found to be safe.

Should I wash fruits and vegetables with water?

Fruits and vegetables should be washed with boiled (then cooled) water, bottled water or disinfected water as described above. Ice should be made with boiled, bottled or disinfected water.

Again, you should not use contaminated water to wash and prepare food or make ice. If you use bottled water, make sure you know where it came from. Otherwise, water should be boiled or disinfected before use.

What organisms can be in contaminated water?

The major organisms of concern are bacteria such as E. coli and Shigella. These organisms primarily affect the gastrointestinal system and cause diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea, and vomiting with or without a fever. These illnesses can seriously affect the health of the elderly, very young or those who are immunocompromised.

Is bottled water safe to use?

If you use bottled water, know where it came from. Otherwise, water should be boiled or disinfected before use. Drink only bottled, boiled or disinfected water until your supply is tested and found safe.

I get my water from a home well. How do I disinfect my well?

It is important to disinfect both the well and plumbing with chlorine bleach to ensure that all infectious agents are killed. If you have water treatment devices, remove all membranes, cartridges and filters and replace them with new membranes, cartridges or filters after the chlorination process is completed.

The amount of chlorine and the length of time you allow it to remain in your system are equally important. Common unscented laundry bleach can be used effectively as a chlorine disinfectant.

When are boil water alerts required?

Individual water systems issue precautionary boil-water alerts when water pressure is lost. Water systems are responsible for notifying their customers directly using whatever means necessary when a self-imposed boil-water alert is issued.

When water testing by the state Public Health Laboratory indicates problems related to water quality, MSDH immediately issues a boil water press release and informs the local water system. For state-issued boil-water alerts, the water system is responsible for notifying customers directly using whatever means necessary.

In addition to posting state-issued alerts on this site, if notified by water system officials, MSDH will also post self-imposed alerts. MSDH will issue press releases to radio, television, and newspaper in the affected area to supplement the public notification efforts of the water system.

How can I get more information?

You can contact the MSDH Bureau of Public Water Supply by calling (601) 576-7518.

In Food Facilities located in area where boil water alerts are in effect, the following provisions must be made.

- If you are under a Boil Water Notice **no tap water should be used**. If any food or drink products were made after this time, then they should be discarded. Any surface or utensil cleaning performed after this time should be re cleaned and sanitized as outlined below.
- **Water used for drinking** must be bottled water or water from an approved supply. Drink dispensers, iced tea and coffee machines which are connected to the water supply may not be used. Ice made with water from the facility cannot be used.
- **Ware washing should be minimized** by using disposable supplies and utensils for food preparation and service. If any ware washing is done bottled water or water from an approved supply must be used followed by sanitization. The same holds true for water used to clean food contact surfaces.
- Bottled water or water from an approved supply must be used for **hand washing** . This can be accomplished by using a temporary hand washing station consisting of a five gallon container with a spigot and a five gallon or greater bucket for retention.
- **Soap and approved water** will be used to wash hands; hands will be further sanitized by the use of sanitary wipes. Individual paper towels will be used for drying.
- **Wear gloves** for all food prep and service. Practice proper glove usage.
- **Use disposable** serving containers and utensils. For any cooking/serving utensils that must be washed, you may set up a temporary three bucket wash rinse sanitize station. Each bucket should be large enough to immerse the articles being washed, wished and sanitized.
- **Toilet facilities must be available** and must be maintained in a sanitary manner.
- Once water has been restored, be sure that you **flush out all water lines** including drink dispensers, all equipment containing water reservoirs, tea machines and coffee machines prior to use. Any Ice must be discarded and then the ice machine needs to be cleaned and a run of ice produced and discarded prior to re-use of the machine.