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Emergency Guidance for Retail Food Establishments Under a Boil Water Order

Public water systems issue Boil Water Orders to notify their users when the drinking water is not safe to consume. A boil water order is issued when there is a coliform bacteria violation, when the water turbidity is over 5.0 NTU, when the water pressure is less than 20 PSI, or when there is a waterborne disease outbreak.

The retail food establishment manager is responsible for ensuring compliance with food safety requirements when under a Boil Water Order. During a boil water advisory, all operations shall cease unless the food establishment can comply with the following guidance.

The following are temporary measures that can be taken under a Boil Water Order, so long as the retail food establishment has water:

General

Post signs or copies of the water system's Boil Water Notice.

Develop a plan to notify and educate employees about emergency procedures.

Drinking Water

- Use commercially bottled water; or
- Use water that has been kept at a rolling boil for at least two minutes, or
- Use water brought in from an approved public water supply in a covered, sanitized container.

Beverages Made with Water

- Do not use post-mix carbonated beverage machines, auto-fill coffee makers, instant hot water heaters, ice machines, etc. using auto-fill methods. Shut off appliances that use tap water.

Ice Making

- Discard existing ice and do not make more ice.
- Use commercially manufactured ice.

Cooking

- Use commercially bottled water, or
- Use water that has been kept at a rolling boil for at least two minutes; or
- Use water brought in from an approved public water supply in a covered, sanitized container.

Handwashing

- Use commercially bottled water, or
- Use water that has been kept at a rolling boil for at least two minutes; or
- Use water brought in from an approved public water supply in a covered, sanitized container.
- Handwashing procedures must follow the Texas Food Establishment Rules. The water temperature for handwashing must be a minimum of 100° Fahrenheit.
- When you are finished washing and drying your hands, use an alcohol-based-hand sanitizer and let hands air dry.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Tableware and Utensils

- If possible, only use single-service items (i.e., disposable plates, cups, and utensils).
- Commercial dishwashers generally are safe to use if the water reaches a final rinse temperature of at least 165 - 180 degrees Fahrenheit.
- If you are not able to use disposable single-service items and do not have a mechanical dish machine, wash dishes by hand following these instructions:
 - Wash and rinse the dishes as you normally would using previously boiled water or commercially purchased water, rinse, sanitize, and allow the dishes to air dry completely before using.

After the Public Water System lifts the Boil Order Notice, the Retail Food Establishment Must:

- Flush pipes / faucets for at least 5 minutes;
- Flush, clean and sanitize equipment with water line connections according to manufacturer's directions
- Flush drinking water fountains for at least 5 minutes.
- Clean and sanitize the ice machine. Discard the first batch of new ice.

Additional questions or concerns can be directed to the Grayson County Health Department Environmental Health Division at 903-465-2878 Ext. 239 or e-mail us at restaurantcomplaints@co.grayson.tx.us