

WASHINGTON COUNTY BOIL WATER ADVISORY

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What is a Boil Water Advisory?**

A Boil Water Advisory is a public notification informing water customers of Washington County to boil their tap water before using it for drinking purposes, typically in response to an event that **could** allow contaminants to enter the water distribution system. Such events would include scheduled water line maintenance, water main breaks, small or widespread loss of system pressure, power outage or a natural disaster.
- 2. Is the water safe?**

Because of the situation, boiling water is a precaution until testing can be completed and confirmed that it is safe.
- 3. How long do I need to boil it?**

The Centers for Disease Control recommend 1 minute (after water begins to boil).
- 4. Should I boil all the water or just what I plan to drink?**

Any water you will consume through drinking, cooking, making ice, and brushing teeth, should be boiled. Using boiled water for hand washing is only necessary for food preparation and eating activities. In lieu of using boiled water for hand washing, you may use bottled water or a hand sanitizer after washing.
- 5. Will a home water filter substitute for boiling water?**

No.
- 6. Is it safe to take a bath or shower?**

Yes. Be careful not to swallow any water. Use caution when bathing babies and young children. Consider giving them a sponge bath to reduce the chance of them swallowing water.
- 7. Can I use my dishwasher?**

Yes. Water temperatures in a residential dishwasher are high enough to be considered safe to use under a boil water advisory.
- 8. We already drank the water, cooked, etc., how do we know we will be ok?**

The boil water advisory was issued as a precaution because of the loss of pressure in the system. There has been no confirmation of contamination and tests are being conducted at this time.
- 9. Do we have to boil the water for our pets?**

No

10. **When I turned on my water there was a lot of air in the line or I had discolored water. There were also particles floating in it. What caused that? Is it safe to use if I experience any of these issues?**
The loss of pressure in the system causes air to get in the line and the discolored water is most likely caused by the flushing of the water system (open fire hydrants) as the system is stabilized and put back in service. The particles are most likely sediment that has been dislodged by the reversal of normal flows and the multiple main breaks. It is safe to use the water.
11. **How long will the boil water advisory last?**
The boil water advisory will remain in effect until further notice. It typically takes 48-72 hours to do appropriate testing of the system and confirm the water is safe. However, testing cannot begin until the system stabilizes and flood waters where testing points are located have receded.
12. **Is there anything I should do to my water after the advisory is lifted?**
If no contamination is found, customers can resume using their water as usual. No flushing of your water lines, ice maker, etc., is necessary. If contamination is found, a new advisory with guidelines will be issued.
13. **I have a well. Does this advisory apply to me?**
This advisory pertains to Washington County water customers only.
14. **How will I know when the Boil Water Advisory is lifted?**
Washington County will notify its customer via the Hyper-Reach phone system, posting on the county website www.washconc.org and the county's Facebook page.