

Boil water notices and advisories

In an ongoing effort of continuous improvement and protecting the health of its customers, The City of Asheville's Water Resources Department will voluntarily issue boil water advisories when events occur that warrant their issuance.

Boil Water Advisory:

A voluntary public statement advising consumers to boil tap water vigorously for at least one minute before consuming it. Advisories are issued when an event has occurred that possibly compromised the quality of the water. An advisory does not mean that the water has been compromised, but the possibility exists.

Boil Water Notice/Order:

A boil water notice/order is required by law/regulation to be issued when E. Coli bacteria contamination exists, and laboratory testing has confirmed the presence of the bacteria in the drinking water supply. The notice/order requires that consumers boil tap water vigorously for at least one minute before consuming it.

Events that initiate a boil water notice/order or advisory:

- Loss of pressure in the water system, or an affected area of the water system.
- A water main break that requires water to be turned off or the pipe has to be opened to the environment.

What should you do during a boil water notice/order or advisory?

- Boil tap water vigorously for at least one minute before using it for drinking, cooking, or any consumption. This includes water used for dental care, making ice, food preparation, or any other consumption purposes.
- It is not necessary to boil water for showering, laundry, or other non-consumptive uses.

How long should water be boiled?

Water should be boiled from the time the advisory is issued and continue until The City of Asheville officially lifts the advisory. During the time the advisory is in effect, the Water Resources Department is performing laboratory analysis to determine if the water is safe and meets all standards. An advisory can last from 24 hours to several days, depending on the event.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) regarding City of Asheville Boil Water Advisories

Question: Is a Boil Water Advisory the same as a Boil Water Notice?

Answer: No.

A Boil Water Advisory is voluntarily issued when water contamination is possible. During an advisory we recommend that customers vigorously boil water for 1 minute before consumption or drink bottled water.

A Boil Water Notice is required by law to be issued when E. Coli contamination is confirmed in the water system. During a notice, affected customers must boil water before consumption or use bottled water.

Q: What if I consumed some water before I found out about the advisory?

A: This advisory was issued as a precaution, so your risk of getting sick is very low. However, if you begin to have a fever, diarrhea, or nausea, you should seek medical attention.

Q: Is it safe to brush my teeth or take a shower?

A: Yes, but be careful not to swallow any water. Use caution with babies and children, consider a sponge bath as an alternative.

Q: Is it safe to wash my hands?

A: Yes, unless you are preparing food, in which case you should use boiled then cooled water or bottled water.

Q: Does my water filter effectively remove the possible contamination?

A: No. Commercially available -lterers (i.e. Brita, Pur, etc.) are not designed to remove bacteria from a water supply. If you have used your -lter during the BWA, it could be contaminated. It is recommended that you discard the filter and replace it with a new one once the BWA has been lifted.

Q: How do I safely prepare baby formula during a BWA?

A: Sterilize all bottles, rings, nipples, caps, and utensils in boiling water for 2 minutes. Water used to make formula should come to a rolling boil for at least 2 minutes.

Q: Is it safe for my pets to drink the water?

A: As with people, pets should drink water that has been boiled (and cooled) or bottled water until the BWA has been lifted.

Q: How can I wash my fruits and vegetables?

A: Use boiled or bottled water for food preparation.

Q: What about my coffee maker, refrigerator, ice maker, or dishwasher?

A: For coffee, use bottled water or water that has been boiled for 1 minute. Most coffee makers don't boil water for a full minute. Do not drink or use water from any appliance connected to your water lines during a BWA.