

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BOIL ORDERS

Please call the Public Works, Water Division office at 309-434-2225 during business hours if you have any further questions or need additional information. For afterhours non-emergencies, please call 309-820-8888.

What does a boil order mean?

It means the water that comes out of the tap should not be used for drinking, brushing your teeth, cooking or washing fruits and vegetables. You should use bottled water for these activities.

How long should I boil my water for?

The affected tap water should be brought to a rolling boil for 5 minutes before being used.

Why has the boil order been called?

Illinois EPA mandates that the boil order be imposed for a minimum of 24 hours starting when the repairs are completed.

Can I drink the water?

During a boil order, only bottled water or water that has been boiled for 5 minutes should be consumed or used to wash dishes, wash fruits/vegetables, make ice cubes or brush teeth.

Can I wash my hands with this water?

It is recommended bottled water or water boiled for 5 minutes should be used for hand washing. When this is not practical, it is recommended that if tap water must be used to wash and rinse, it should be followed up with the use of a hand sanitizer. Consuming unsafe water is the most likely way to become ill. Using extra precautions with hand washing ensures that hands are clean for eating.

Can I shower or take a bath in this water?

Yes, it is safe to shower or bathe in the water. The primary concern is that the water not be consumed. Instruct children not to put the water in their mouth when they are bathing. When bathing infants, extra precaution should be taken. Use bottled water or water that has been boiled for 5 minutes and cooled for use.

How do I wash my dishes?

Use bottled water or water that has been boiled for 5 minutes to wash and rinse dishes. Home dishwashers cannot be assured to completely kill organisms that may be in the water.

Can I wash my clothes in the water?

Yes, you may continue to use the water to wash clothes. The major concern is consuming the water.

Can my pets drink the water?

Animals generally are not affected in the same way as people by contaminants in the water. An individual may give their pet bottled water or water that has been boiled for 5 minutes and cooled if they choose. Fish tanks should not be affected.

Is it safe to breast feed during the boil order after bathing in the water?

Cleaning the breast area with soap and bottled water or water boiled for 5 minutes and cooled prior to feeding will provide assurance that the child not ingest contaminants that may be on the skin.

Are vending machines that mix drinks safe? (Coffee, Tea & Hot Chocolate machines)

These machines that use tap water should not be used until the boil order has been lifted.

Who can be affected?

Anyone who ingests contaminated water may become ill. Infants, young children, the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems are more at risk of illness.

What are the symptoms of water-borne illness?

Disease symptoms may include diarrhea, cramps, nausea and possible jaundice and associated headaches and fatigue. Symptoms may appear as early as a few hours to several days after infection and may last more than two weeks. These symptoms, however, are not just associated with disease-causing organisms in drinking water; they may also be caused by several other factors. If you are ill with these symptoms, contact your health care provider.

How long will the boil order remain in effect?

The boil order will remain in effect until laboratory sampling confirms that the water quality has not been compromised. Testing of samples will occur 24 hours after samples are taken. Notification will be issued as soon as the boil order is lifted.

What should I do once the boil order is lifted?

You may return to normal use of your water service once flushing is complete using the flushing instructions provided on the boil order lifted notice. A PDF of the flushing instructions is available at: <https://www.cityblm.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=25952>