

# FACT SHEET

## WHAT TO DO DURING A BOIL WATER ADVISORY

### What is a Boil Water Advisory?

A Boil Water Advisory is a public health recommendation advising customers to boil their tap water before using it. This is in response to an event that **could** have allowed contaminants to enter the water distribution system. Because the water quality is unknown, customers should assume the water is unsafe to drink and take the appropriate precautions.

### When does the Village of Bald Head Island issue a Boil Water Advisory?

Typically, issuance of a Boil Water Advisory occurs after a water main break repair, small or widespread loss of pressure in our water system, or a natural disaster.

In some cases, our crews can repair a water main while maintaining adequate pressure to prevent contamination from entering the water distribution system. (When we do a repair in this way, no Boil Water Advisory is needed.)

When we issue a Boil Water Advisory, we notify only the customers affected. If the risk of contamination is widespread, we will arrange publicity in the news media, put information on our website, etc. to inform the public.

### How long will a Boil Water Advisory be in effect?

An advisory will remain in effect until bacteriological test samples show the water is safe to drink. Bacteriological testing typically takes 24 to 48 hours to complete.

## Boiling water

### To boil water

- Heat the water until bubbles come from the bottom of the pot to the top.
- Once the water reaches a rolling boil, let it boil for 1 minute.
- Turn off the heat source and let the water cool.
- Pour the water into a clean container with a cover for storage.

### Water filters

Boil tap water even if it is filtered. Most kitchen and other household water filters typically **do not** remove bacteria or viruses.

### Preparing and cooking food

- Wash all fruits and vegetables with boiled water that has cooled or bottled water.
- Bring water to a rolling boil for 1 minute before adding food to cook.
- Use boiled water when preparing drinks, such as coffee, tea, and lemonade
- Wash food preparation surfaces with boiled water.

### Feeding babies and using formula

- Use ready-to-use baby formula, if possible.
- Prepare powdered or concentrated baby formula with bottled water. Use boiled water if you do not have bottled water. Disinfect water for baby formula if you cannot boil your water (see above for directions on how to use bleach to disinfect water).
- Wash and sterilize bottles and nipples before use.
- If you cannot sterilize bottles, try to use single-serve, ready-to-feed bottles.

## Ice

- Do not use ice from ice trays, ice dispensers, or ice makers.
- Throw out all ice made with tap water *during* Boil Water Advisory.
- Make new ice with boiled or bottled water.

## Bathing and showering

Be careful not to swallow any water when bathing or showering. Use caution when bathing babies and young children. Consider giving them a sponge bath to reduce the chance of them swallowing water.

## Brushing teeth

Brush teeth with boiled or bottled water. Do not use untreated tap water.

## Washing dishes

Household dishwashers generally are safe to use if the water reaches a final rinse temperature of at least 150 degrees or if the dishwasher has a sanitizing cycle.

To wash dishes by hand:

- Wash and rinse the dishes as you normally would using hot water.
- In a separate basin, add 1 teaspoon of unscented household liquid bleach for each gallon of
- warm water.
- Soak the rinsed dishes in the water for at least one minute.
- Let the dishes air dry completely.

## Pets

Pets can get some of the same diseases as people. It is a good idea to give them boiled water that has been cooled.

## For more information, go to the following links:

[Personal Preparation and Storage of Safe Water](#): CDC provides guidance on the amount of water needed for good health, as well how to prepare and store safe water before and during an emergency.

[Hygiene and Handwashing](#): CDC provides guidance on alternative hygienic practices when water is not available or is contaminated.

[A Guide to Water Filters](#): CDC maintains a guide for filters that remove *Cryptosporidium* or *Giardia*.