



Guidelines for Food Establishments During a Boil Water Order

Guidelines

During a boil water order, water may serve as a source of contamination for food, food equipment, utensils and hands. Therefore the following is guidance for food establishments to follow when a boil water order is issued:

1. Voluntarily cease operations until the boil water order is lifted.

OR

2. Obtain an alternate supply of potable water and/or ice and provide satisfactory methods for handwashing, food preparation, and equipment cleaning and sanitation.

Note: water for drinking or cooking must be vigorously boiled for three (3) minutes prior to use or the establishment must use bottled water from a commercially approved source or other source approved by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). Ice must also be from an approved source. Discard ice that may have been made from or exposed to contaminated water.

Handwashing (Food handlers and/or public)

A germicidal soap or hand cleanser shall be used, followed by drying with paper toweling or approved air-drying devices and subsequent application of a hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizers are not a substitute for proper handwashing. To reduce the risk of contaminating food products, direct hand contact with ready-to-eat food is prohibited.

Ice Machines

Ice machines that are directly connected to the water system must not be used. Shut the machine down, empty the contents of the unit, clean and sanitize the unit, and leave the unit off until the water supply is declared acceptable for use. Discard ice that may have been made from or exposed to contaminated water.

Food Preparation

Produce

- use prewashed, pre-packaged produce
- use produce washed prior to the boil water order
- use frozen/canned produce
- wash fresh product with potable water from an alternate approved source

Preparation and cooking requiring water, including and reconstitution of liquid concentrates and dried foods

- use only food that was prepared prior to the boil water order
- discontinue sale of prepared foods requiring water
- obtain prepared foods from alternate source (i.e. local deli or caterer)
- use potable water from alternate approved source

Carbonated and other beverages

- substitute with bottled or canned beverages and turn off water lines to beverage dispensers. Such dispensers shall be completely flushed and sanitized before being returned to service after the boil water order has been lifted.
- use potable water from alternate approved source.

Coffee Machines

- Coffee machines that are directly connected to the water system can be used if the water reaches a boiling temperature for one (1) minute. If you are not sure how hot the water gets, then bottled water from an alternate, approved source or previously boiled water must be used.

Utensils and food contact equipment

- a properly operated manual dishwashing arrangement should be satisfactory for sanitizing utensils so long as the normal washing, rinsing, and sanitizing steps are followed and provided that the concentration of sanitizer (chlorine, iodine, quaternary ammonia) is at the proper level
- a properly operating and maintained mechanical temperature or chemical dishwashing machine should also be satisfactory for sanitizing utensils
- use only single-service tableware and kitchenware
- use potable water from an alternative approved source
- store food dispensing utensils in the food products

Garbage grinders - no change

Toilets - no change, if water pressure is available

- if no water pressure is available, use adjacent facilities if possible or provide chemical toilets (e.g. porta-johns)

3. After the boil water order is lifted

- flush the building water lines and clean faucet screens, water line strainers on mechanical dishwashing machines etc.
- purge all water lines connected to fixtures and appliances, such as ice machines, beverage makers, produce and seafood misting devices, hot water heaters etc. Clean and sanitize all fixtures, sinks and equipment connected to waterlines.
- Follow the manufacturer's recommended procedures for:
 - disinfecting water softeners, prior to putting them back into service;
 - replacing filters or media in small filters on ice machines, water treatment systems, beverage vending machines; and
 - replacing carbon filters or carbon media in filters.

Note:

In cases where no water under pressure is available, a food establishment that prepares and serves food other than prepackaged food items must cease operations until water is restored or an alternative water supply is established that is acceptable to DNR or DHSS.

Questions?

Contact the Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention toll-free at 1-866-628-9891, or your local public health agency, for further information concerning these processes or if special circumstances arise.