

Massachusetts  
Department  
of  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION

Massachusetts Department of  
Environmental Protection  
One Winter Street  
Boston, MA 02108-4746

Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
Deval Patrick, Governor  
Tim Murray, Lt. Governor

Executive Office of  
Environmental Affairs  
Ian A. Bowles  
Secretary

Department of  
Environmental Protection  
Laurie Burt  
Commissioner

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This information is available in  
alternate format by calling our  
ADA Coordinator at  
617-556-1171.



## MassDEP Drinking Water Program Fact Sheet Boil Water Order

Boil water orders or advisories are public announcements advising the public that they should boil their tap water for drinking and other human consumption uses like cooking, hand washing, brushing teeth, etc. Boil water orders are **preventative** measures issued to protect public health from waterborne infectious agents that **could be** or are known to be present in drinking water. Boil water orders are issued by the MassDEP Drinking Water Program (DWP) when MassDEP DWP determines that the consumers of a particular public water system should take precautionary measures with their tap water.

When a boil order or advisory is issued the local public water supplier (PWS) must take appropriate corrective action, continue to monitor its water supply, and notify customers when it has remedied the problem and the boil water order is lifted. The PWS should be contacted for details. See public water suppliers contacts list at <http://www.mass.gov/dep/about/organization/watcon.htm#dw>. Some cities or towns may also provide information on their website. For general information on boil water orders consumers may also review the Boil Order information on this site or USEPA website and fact sheets on contaminants.

### GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

**DISCARD** any ice, juice, formula, stored water and uncooked foods that were prepared with tap water during the period of concern.

**USE BOILED OR BOTTLED WATER** for drinking, food preparation, mixing baby formula, making ice, washing food, manual utensil and equipment washing, rinsing and sanitizing, brushing teeth or any other activity involving the consumption of water.

**CHILD CARE CENTERS AND SCHOOLS** should use only bottled or boiled water for mixing infant formula, hand washing, and for mixing sanitizing solutions for diapering areas and surfaces such as tabletops and toys. Adult employees should use a hand sanitizer after washing hands with tap water and soap. Do not use drinking fountains and discontinue the use of water play tables. Follow all guidance provided by the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) and/or the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC).

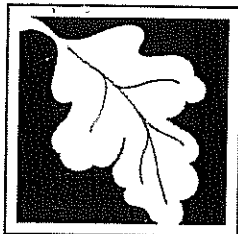
**RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS** must follow the guidance of the local board of health and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MassDPH). Wholesale food manufacturers must follow the guidance of MassDPH. Meat Processing Plants must follow the guidance of MassDPH and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

**SWIMMING POOLS, HOT TUBS, AND SPAS** that are operated properly, including routine monitoring for adequate disinfection levels, may continue to operate.

**SHARE THIS INFORMATION** with all other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, visitors). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

**TRANSLATE THIS NOTICE** for anyone who does not understand English.

### DRINKING THE WATER



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There are two simple and effective methods you can use to treat drinking water for microbiological contaminants (bacteria):

**A** **Boiling:** Bring the water to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute. Laboratory data show this is adequate to make the water safe for drinking.

**OR**

**B** **Disinfecting:** Disinfectant tablets obtained from a wilderness store or pharmacy may be used. In an emergency, liquid chlorine bleach such as Clorox® or Purex® can be used at a dose of 8 drops (or 1 teaspoon) of bleach to each gallon of water. (*Careful measurement with a clean dropper or other accurate measuring device is required when using liquid chlorine bleach.*) Let stand for at least 30 minutes before use. Read the label to see that the bleach has 5-6% available chlorine.

### WASHING DISHES

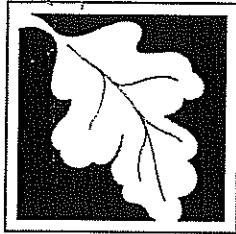
It is best to use disposable tableware during the time the water needs disinfection. If that is not possible, the following steps should be taken:

**1** Wash dishes normally but be sure to rinse them in a solution of 1 teaspoon of bleach, as mentioned above, in a gallon of warm water (submersion in a dishpan for a minimum of 5 minutes is advised). The dishes should be allowed to air dry. Gloves should be worn when handling bleach to minimize any skin irritation.

**2** Because of the many variables involved with dishes washed in a dishwasher, it is recommended that you use the additional rinse step, as described above, after washing.

### BATHING AND SHOWERING

Young children should be given sponge baths rather than put in a bathtub where they might ingest the tap water. Adults or children should take care not to swallow water when showering.



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### BRUSHING YOUR TEETH

Use only disinfected *or* boiled water for brushing your teeth.

### ICE

Ice cubes are not safe unless made with disinfected *or* boiled water. The freezing process does not kill the bacteria or other microorganisms.

### WASHING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Use only disinfected *or* boiled water to wash fruits or vegetables that are to be eaten raw.

### HAND WASHING

Use only boiled *or* disinfected water for hand washing.

### COOKING

Bring water to a rolling boil for 1 minute before adding food.

### INFANTS

For infants use only prepared canned baby formula that is not condensed and does not require added water. **Do not** use powdered formulas prepared with contaminated water.

### HOUSEPLANTS AND GARDENS

Water can be used without treatment for watering household plants and garden plants. The exception would be things like strawberries or tomatoes where the water would contact the edible fruit.

### HOUSE PETS

The same precautions taken to protect humans should be applied to pets. Aquatic organisms (e.g. fish) should not be exposed to water containing elevated levels of bacteria. If the organism's water needs to be refreshed use appropriately boiled or bottled water.

### FLUSH ALL TAPS WHEN THE BOIL WATER ORDER IS LIFTED

When flushing it is important to carefully follow the instructions provided. **Flushing your household and building water lines including: interior and exterior faucets, showers, water/ice dispensers, water treatment units, etc.** See details at <http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/drinking/flushing.htm> Water heaters may need to be disinfected and flushed to remove