



Boil Order Procedure & FAQ's

A boil order is most commonly issued when the Public Works Department needs to shut down a segment of water main due to an emergency water main break or other maintenance activity. Illinois rules and regulations call for the immediate issuance of a boil order for any emergency which results in water pressures falling below 20 pounds per square inch. The boil order in this case is precautionary and does not mean that the water has tested positive for microbiological contamination. It is simply a precautionary measure until proper testing can be completed. Notification is made by Public Works to those consumers affected.

During the day, Public Works staff will go door-to-door to issue the boil order notification. If a customer is not home, a RED door tag will be left on the front door. An additional tag will be left near the garage or other conspicuous location in case a homeowner does not normally enter through their front door.

Occasionally, a boil order needs to be issued overnight. Under these circumstances, Public Works will not ring doorbells in the late evening or overnight hours but will simply hang door tags for the residents to see in the morning. At this time, the Village does not have the ability to target specific addresses via phone or email contact. If the water is ever confirmed to be contaminated, much more notification will take place including news and media outlets, emergency notification, and other methods. But for a precautionary boil order with no confirmed contamination, only the door tags will be hung overnight.

You have questions, we have answers:

WHAT IS A BOIL ORDER?

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 only bottled water or water that has been boiled for five minutes for these activities.

HOW LONG DO I NEED TO BOIL MY WATER?

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

CAN I DRINK MY WATER?

During a precautionary 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.

HOW LONG WILL IT REMAIN IN EFFECT?

Each boil order situation is different, making it impossible to predict how long the boil order will remain in effect. It will not be lifted until testing shows that the water meets public health standards. However, in general, a routine boil order and verification testing window will take between 24 and 48 hours to complete. Once a boil order has been lifted, Public Works will go door-to-door again and issue BLUE tags to notify residents that the water has tested safe and the boil order is no longer in effect.

DO I NEED TO FLUSH OUT THE WATER SYSTEM IN MY HOUSE FOLLOWING THE BOIL ORDER?

If a precautionary boil order was issued via RED tag, and a BLUE tag has been issued to clear it, then no. The water tested safe, and no contamination is known to have occurred. If the water ever tests positive for microbiological contamination, more instructions will be issued at that time.

CAN I WASH MY HANDS WITH THE WATER?

It is recommended that 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 THE WATER?

Yes, it is safe to shower or bathe in the water. The primary concern is that the water should 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 including the use of 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?

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.

Additional Resources:

[Lake County Health Department \(Boil Order Guidelines | Lake County, IL \(lakecountyl.gov\)\)](#)