How to Use Water Safely in Your Swimming Pool During a Boil Water Advisory

What do I need to do with my water system prior to reopening?
If your business has not been operational for any period of time during a Boil Water Advisory, the water system must be flushed to remove all stagnant water from the water lines and water system prior to reopening using the following procedure:

- Run all cold water taps for at least 5 minutes before you use them.
- Run all hot water taps for at least 5 minutes before you use them (even if the water is not hot).
- If your service connection is long or complex, consider flushing for a longer period of time.

What is a boil water advisory?
A boil water advisory is issued when harmful germs (e.g., *E.coli* bacteria, *Giardia* parasite) may be in a drinking water supply. Drinking water contaminated with these germs can make people and animals very sick. Boiling will kill the germs and make the water safe to drink.

What immediate steps must a pool operator take when a boil water advisory is issued?

- All alternative water provided to clients for drinking must be safe.
- Signs should be posted at all faucets, including the entrance, kitchen area and washrooms as a reminder of the boil water advisory and not to drink the water. See attached signs.
- Turn off or disconnect drinking fountains.
- Provide public and staff washrooms with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol content.

Does the pool need to be closed during a boil water advisory?
There is no need to close the pool during a boil water advisory unless Alberta Health Services specifically directs you to.

Does the pool water need to be treated before use during a boil water advisory?

Chlorine is not very effective against *Cryptosporidium*. If *Cryptosporidium* is potentially present in the drinking water supply, a CT value of 15300 is needed to destroy this organism. Therefore all fill water may need to be treated to a CT of 15300 prior to the pool being open to patrons.

*Contact your public health inspector to determine if treatment for Cryptosporidium is required.*

To calculate the CT Value of 15300, use the following formula:

\[ CT = C \text{ (concentration of free chlorine in ppm)} \times T \text{ (time in minutes)} \]

Example: 20 ppm × 765 min (i.e. 12.75 hours) = 15300
Normal pool use and operation can resume after water used to fill the pool has reached a CT of 15300. The free chlorine and pH levels should also be returned to the normal operating range allowed by Alberta Health Services. Any new water added to the pool, either through manual methods or from automated fill systems, needs to be treated to a CT of 15300 or be from an uncontaminated source. If the automated fill cannot be isolated, the pool cannot operate during the boil water advisory.

Additional treatment such as full stream UV installed on the fill line may be considered as equivalent to treating the swimming pool to a CT of 15300.

**When a boil water advisory has been issued, how should the water be used?**

When a boil water advisory has been issued, **do not** use the tap water to:

- drink
- prepare foods
- make juice

and

- make ice
- wash fruits or vegetables
- brush teeth

During a boil water advisory use boiled water, bottled water or water from another safe public supply not affected by the advisory. Throw away any ice in your freezer made with the water, and sanitize the ice cube trays (see next page). Make ice with boiled water that is cooled.

**What is the right way to boil water?**

To boil water, bring it to a rolling boil for at least one minute. Only boil as much water as you can safely lift without spilling. Put the pot on the back burner. Be careful not to burn yourself or others.

**What special precautions should people with a weakened immune system take?**

For clients with weakened immune system, entering the pool during a boil water advisory should not pose any additional risks, as the pool operator would have taken any needed special precautions.

**Is bottled water or water from self-serve water dispensers safe to use?**

Sometimes you can use bottled water, but it depends on when and how the water was bottled. Bottling plants and/or water dispensers that use local water must treat the water to remove harmful germs. Check with the Environmental Public Health Office (phone numbers below) about bottled water brands or water dispensers that have been treated so the water is safe. You can also use water bottled from another public water supply not affected by the advisory.

**Is the water safe to drink or cook with if an on-site water filtration device is used?**

If you have a water filtration device, **do not** use the water during a boil water advisory. Many filtration devices do not remove harmful germs. Check with the manufacturer to find out what your filtration device removes.

**GENERAL HYGIENE DURING A BOIL WATER ADVISORY**

**Can tap water be used for handwashing?**

During a boil water advisory, you can use the water to wash your hands. Wash your hands with tap water and soap, making sure to lather for at least 20 seconds. Rinse your hands well with running water, and dry them with a paper towel. After you dry your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
Can tap water be used for showering?
Healthy individuals may take showers with untreated tap water, if they are careful not to swallow any tap water. Younger children (elementary school age and younger) should not use the water for showering, unless properly instructed and directly supervised.

Can tap water be used for washing laundry?
During a boil water advisory, you can continue washing laundry like normal. Ensure that a mechanical dryer (hot drying method) is used to completely dry the material.

Can tap water be used for general cleaning purposes?
The water supply can be used for general cleaning of contact surfaces such as floors and walls using regular cleaning and disinfection practices.

Is there further information on safe food preparation in a public food establishment?

PROCEDURES TO TAKE AFTER A BOIL WATER ADVISORY IS ENDED
- Remove all aerator or screen devices from faucets.
- Flush all hot and cold water-using fixtures and faucets by running them for five minutes. If your service connection is long or complex, consider flushing for a longer period of time.
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces and equipment that have been in contact with tap water during the boil water advisory.
- Ensure all equipment with tap water line connections are drained, flushed, cleaned, and disinfected according to the manufacturer’s recommendations.
- Flush, drain, clean and disinfect potable water cisterns that contained the affected water source.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle according to the manufacturer’s recommendations.
- Replace the filters on any tap water filtration devices, and flush the fixture according to the manufacturer’s directions.
- Hot water heaters and hot water heating systems may require some water be drained to get rid of any sediment.

Contact Alberta Health Services, Environmental Public Health, North Zone at 780-513-7517 to arrange an inspection prior to reopening to the public.

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

Edmonton Main Office 780-735-1800  Grande Prairie Main Office 780-513-7517
Calgary Main Office 403-943-2295  Red Deer Main Office 403-356-6366
Lethbridge Main Office 403-388-6689  www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph.asp
CAUTION!

Boil Water Advisory in effect. This water is not safe for drinking.

Contact Environmental Public Health for more information.

Edmonton and Area  Ph: 780-735-1800  EdmontonZone.EnvironmentalHealth@albertahealthservices.ca
Calgary and Area   Ph: 1-855-943-2288  CalgaryZone.EnvironmentalHealth@albertahealthservices.ca
Southern Alberta  Ph: 403-388-6689  SouthZone.EnvironmentalHealth@albertahealthservices.ca
Northern Alberta  Ph: 780-513-7517  NorthZone.EnvironmentalHealth@albertahealthservices.ca
Central Alberta   Ph: 1-877-360-6366  CentralZone.EnvironmentalHealth@albertahealthservices.ca

www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph.asp
Boil Water Advisory in effect.

WASH YOUR HANDS

Apply hand sanitizer *after* handwashing.