

How to Use Water Safely in Your Child Care Facility During a Boil Water Advisory

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.

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 baby formula
- make juice
- 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 of the scalding hazard.

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

If a child has a weakened immune system, have the child's parents consult with a doctor.

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.

Can a drinking water fountain still be used?

No. Turn off or disconnect drinking fountains.

Is the water safe to drink 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.

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

Follow the procedures listed in the document, “How to Use Water Safely in Your Food Establishment During a Boil Water Advisory”. This document is available on the Alberta Health Services website, or by contacting your local Public Health Inspector.

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 face or hand wiping cloths?

No. Use alternative safe drinking water (bottled or previously boiled and cooled) for wiping faces or hands of infants, toddlers or children. Children’s face wipes can also be used.

Can tap water be used for brushing teeth?

During a boil water advisory, **do not** use tap water to brush teeth. Use boiled water that is cooled, bottled water or water from another safe source.

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 walls and floors using regular cleaning and disinfection practices.

Is the water safe to fill water play areas or wading pools for children?

Water table play during a boil water advisory is discouraged. However, the following process will disinfect the water for safe play. Use water that has been previously boiled and cooled, or disinfect the water in a water play table by adding 45 ml (about 1.5 oz) of liquid household bleach to every 45 litres of water. Mix and let stand for at least 20 minutes prior to use.

PROCEDURES TO TAKE AFTER A BOIL WATER ADVISORY IS ENDED

- Flush all water-using fixtures by running the tap for five minutes.
- Ensure equipment with water line connections such as refrigerator water and ice dispensers are drained, flushed, cleaned and disinfected according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Flush, drain, clean and disinfect cisterns that contained the affected water source.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- Drain and refill hot water heaters that have been set below 45°C/110°F.

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

*Edmonton Main Office
Calgary Main Office
Lethbridge Main Office*

*780-735-1800
403-943-2295
403-388-6689*

*Grande Prairie Main Office
Red Deer Main Office
www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph.asp*

*780-513-7517
403-356-6366*

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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

Calgary and Area Ph: 1-855-943-2288

Southern Alberta Ph: 403-388-6689

Northern Alberta Ph: 780-513-7517

Central Alberta Ph: 1-877-360-6366

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Boil Water Advisory in effect.

WASH YOUR HANDS

Apply hand sanitizer after handwashing.

