




JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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Department: Jefferson County Public Health		Division: Environmental Health		Section of Procedure Manual: Food Program	
Title: BOIL WATER ADVISORY FOR FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS					
Subject: Guidelines for food service providers to follow before and during a boil water advisory					
Effective (date): 01/13	Replaces (date): 06/10	Renewal due (date) – every 2 yrs: 01/13		Page: 1 of: 4	
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BOIL WATER ADVISORY FOR FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS

Background

State Food Service regulations (WAC 246-215) require that food service establishment (FSE) owners ensure that their water supply is from a source approved by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) Public Water System regulations (WAC 246-290). When boil water advisory or other water emergency is issued by the state Department of Health, FSE connected to the affected water system must close unless otherwise authorized by the Jefferson County Public Health (JCPH) Officer.

Provisions for potable water during an emergency have been established through WAC-215-081 (3), which states: *“Bottled drinking water used or sold for food service must be obtained from approved sources in accordance with chapters [246-290](#) and [246-291](#) WAC.*

In December 2009, the City of Port Townsend water system had a water main break that initiated temporary closure by JCPH and DOH of all food establishments connected to the City water system. Closure was mandatory until bacteriological water quality testing results were satisfactory.

The interruption in normal business activities of the FSE in Port Townsend in the 2009 incident highlighted the need to create a guidance document with three goals in mind: 1) prevent waterborne illness due to contaminated water; 2) inform the public and facilities that serve food, how to serve food without using possible contaminated water; 3) protect vulnerable populations from exposure to possible contaminated water and exposure to possible water borne pathogens.

The intent of this document is to establish minimum standards that *may allow* FSE’S to remain open in the event of a Boil Water Advisory.

Minimum Requirements of a Boil Water Plan, if applicable

Shut off:

- ✓ Ice Machines
- ✓ Drinking water fountains
- ✓ Preclude misters
- ✓ Bottled water refill machines
- ✓ Pop Dispensers connected to water supply
- ✓ Running water dippers wells

Discard:

- ✓ Ice made with contaminated water
- ✓ Beverages made with contaminated water

Ice:

Use packaged ice from an approved source
Use boiled (rolling boil for 1 min. minimum then cooled) or bottled water for:

- ✓ Drinking
- ✓ Cooking
- ✓ Food preparation
- ✓ Washing produce
- ✓ Dishwashing
- ✓ Hand washing

Dishwashing options:

- ✓ Mechanical dishwasher with high temperature or chemical sanitizer (verify correct operation); or
- ✓ Three compartment sink with boiled water: use existing 3 compartment sink or use a temporary set up with 3 adequately size clean tubs:
 1. disinfected sinks or tubs with 1 tsp chlorine per gallon of water
 2. Wash items in hot water with detergent
 3. Rinse items in warm water
 4. Sanitize in cool water chlorine solution (1 tsp chlorine per gallon of water) or hot water (170 degrees) for 1 minute.
 5. Air dry

Emergency contact:

- ✓ Create a list of contacts that will be readily available during an emergency specific to your establishment.

Hand washing:

- ✓ Wash with antibacterial soap and water
- ✓ Establish a temporary hand wash station using 5 gallon minimum insulated container with free flowing locking faucet (see diagram). Water for hand washing must be boiled for one minute prior to dispensing warm into the temporary hand wash container.

Proper Hand Wash Station



Employee information:

- ✓ Post signs or copies of water system's health advisory
- ✓ Develop a plan to notify and educate employees about emergency procedures

Menu:

- ✓ Evaluate your establishment's menu and consider modify it to eliminate or minimize foods that would be at higher risk to contamination, ie: ready to eat foods that have no cooking/kill step as a barrier to food borne illness risk.
- ✓ Prohibit specified menu items deemed too difficult to prepare without adequate potable water.

Boil Water Advisory Procedure

Before a Boil Water Advisory

FSE shall:

1. Develop a boil water plan specific to the operation that minimizes water use and mitigates use of contaminated water.
2. Submit the proposed boil water plan to JCPH Food Safety program for review
3. Submit menu for foods appropriate to serve
4. Include emergency contact information included cell phones and email address

JCPH shall:

- Review the submitted boil water plan for adequacy
 - If items are missing a plan review letter will be sent to the establishment for modification
- When boil water plan is adequate, an approval letter will be created
- The approval letter, a copy of the approved boil water plan and issuance of an updated annual food permit containing a reference to the approved boil water plan will be mailed to the FSE.

During a Boil Water Advisory

FSE shall:

1. **All FSE's must be closed** *unless a pre-approved boil water plan is shown on the posted annual food permit*
2. FSE with pre- approved boil water plans must implement the plan immediately
3. Contact JCPH to verify that approved boil water plan has been implemented
4. Obtain approval from JCPH prior to returning to normal operation

JCPH shall:

- Spot check by inspecting or contact the establishments to either verify closure or ensure pre-approved boil water plan has been implemented in order to protect public health.
- Contact affected FSE by phone, e-mail or spot check site inspections to educate and ensure that the public's health is being protected during the Boil Water Advisory.
- Coordinate with DOH to remain informed of status of the Boil Water Advisory.
- When Advisory has been rescinded JCPH will use email contact information or site visits to communicate with FSE.

It is imperative that JCPH has current contact information; otherwise communication may be delayed, impacting your business unnecessarily. *Keep your plan current, including changes in owner, service hours, menu, and contact information.*

No Water Procedure

FSE shall:

1. All food establishments must close immediately
2. Within 1 hour of the loss of water must contact:
 - *The water system operator or manager*
 - *Washington State Department of Health, SW Drinking Water Operations (360) 236-3023 or (360) 236-3030 or (877) 481-4901*
 - *Jefferson County Public Health (JCPH) 385-9444 or 385-9400 and www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org*
3. Reopen when instructed by JCPH or when water is available and proper water flushing has occurred.

JCPH shall:

- Coordinate with the Department of Health (DOH) on the status of the water system and the issues causing the outage.
- Assist in keeping the FSE informed based on coordination with DOH.
- Provide guidance to FSE on necessary measures to minimize illness associated with the water outage and flushing of water lines following the outage.
- Conduct education and compliance visits to ensure that the risk to public health is being avoided.
- Notify the establishment when establishment can be reopened.