

Frequently Asked Questions about Operating Under a Boil Order

Why has the boil order been called?

Municipalities perform routine testing to assure the community's drinking water is safe. Recently, tests have indicated the presence of bacteria in the water. Total coliform bacteria are naturally present in the environment and possibly indicate the presence of other, harmful organisms. The municipality has issued the boil order as a precaution to protect the citizen's health and is working diligently to resolve this issue as quickly as possible.

Can I drink the water?

During a boil order, only bottled water or water that has been boiled for 1 minute and cooled should be consumed or used to wash dishes, wash fruits/vegetables, make ice cubes or brush teeth.

Can I wash my hands with this water?

The DeKalb County Health Department recommends that bottled water or water boiled for 1 minute and cooled 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 this water?

Yes, it is safe to shower or bathe in the water. The primary concern is that the water 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 and the DeKalb County Health Department recommends the use of bottled water or water that has been boiled for 1 minute and cooled for use.

How do I wash my dishes?

Use bottled water or water that has been boiled for 1 minute and cooled 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 in the water?

Yes, you may continue to use the water to wash clothes. The major concern is consuming the water.

Are my children safe at school?

Yes, School Districts, as well as private schools, have quickly implemented plans to ensure the safety of children in the schools. These measures include shutting down the drinking fountains and supplying bottled water as an alternative drinking source. Hand sanitizers have been distributed to ensure proper hand washing is occurring. For hand washing, the students are encouraged to wash as normal and then follow with the use of hand sanitizer. Food service operations are operating under the recommendations provided by the health department to ensure only approved water sources are used. The schools have been extremely responsive and are doing everything possible to keep your children safe.

FAQs Continued

Is it safe to eat in restaurants?

Yes, it is safe to eat in restaurants. Special procedures are required for them to ensure that food preparation and handling is done in a safe manner. Additional procedures are also required to provide safe dish washing. The DeKalb County Health Department is checking area restaurants to confirm that safe practices are being followed.

What do we need to do when the boil order is lifted?

When the order is lifted you should flush the buildings water lines for one minute and clean the faucet screens. Also, purge water-using fixtures and appliances of standing water and/or ice. This includes changing the water filter on refrigerators.

Are swimming pools safe?

They are safe as long as proper levels of treatment are maintained. Water from swimming pools should never be consumed.

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 1 minute and cooled if they choose. Fish tanks should not be affected.

Is it safe to breast feed during the boil order after bathing in the water?

Cleaning the breast area with soap and bottled water or water boiled for 1 minute and cooled prior to feeding will provide assurance that the child not ingest contaminants that may be on the skin.

I am on a well, am I affected?

Anyone who receives a bill from the Municipality for water services should observe the boil order, however if you are on a private well water supply then you are not affected by the boil order.

Are vending machines that mix drinks safe? (Coffee, Tea & Hot Chocolate machines)

These machines that use Municipal water should not be used until the boil order has been lifted.