



**CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION  
POLICY, STANDARDS, AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SECTION  
PUBLIC SANITATION AND RETAIL FOOD SAFETY BRANCH**

**Guidance for Retail Food Establishments Under a Boil Water Order  
(Revised 02/2021)**

Public water systems issue Boil Water Orders to notify their users when the drinking water is not safe to consume. A boil water order is issued when there is a coliform bacteria violation, when the water turbidity is over 5.0 NTU, when the water pressure is less than 20 PSI, or when there is a waterborne disease outbreak.

The retail food establishment manager is responsible for ensuring compliance with food safety requirements when under a Boil Water Order.

Following are temporary measures that can be taken under a Boil Water Order:

**Drinking Water**

- Use commercially bottled water; or
- Use water that has been kept at a rolling boil for at least 3 minutes, or
- Use water brought in from an approved public water supply in a covered, sanitized container.

**Beverages Made with Water**

- Do not use post-mix carbonated beverage machines, auto-fill coffee makers, instant hot water heaters, ice machines, etc. using auto-fill methods.

**Ice Making**

- Discard existing ice and do not make more ice.
- Use commercially manufactured ice.

## **Cooking**

- Use commercially bottled water, or
- Use water that has been kept at a rolling boil for at least 3 minutes; or
- Use water brought in from an approved public water supply in a covered, sanitized container.

## **Handwashing**

- Use commercially bottled water, or
- Use water that has been kept at a rolling boil for at least 3 minutes; or
- Use water brought in from an approved public water supply in a covered, sanitized container.
- Handwashing procedures must follow the Texas Food Establishment Rules. The water temperature for handwashing must be a minimum of 100° Fahrenheit.

## **Cleaning and Sanitizing Tableware and Utensils**

- Only use single-service items.

## **After the Public Water System lifts the Boil Order Notice, the Retail Food Establishment Must:**

- Flush pipes / faucets for at least 5 minutes;
- Flush, clean and sanitize equipment with water line connections according to manufacturer's directions
- Flush drinking water fountains for at least 5 minutes.
- Clean and sanitize the ice machine. Discard the first batch of new ice.

**Additional questions or concerns can be directed to the  
Retail Food Safety Branch at 512-834-6753**

**<https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/foodestablishments/default.aspx>**