

About Boil Advisories

The PCMA is required by law to issue a boil-water advisory any time there is an occurrence of a water main break. An advisory does not mean that contamination has been found in the water; it is a precautionary measure that is standard procedure. The PCMA uses a banner across the Boil Water Alert signs that states "System Repairs" to indicate that no contamination has been found in the water and that the alert was called as a precaution. Water is routinely tested every day, more frequently in the event of main breaks. Many residents assume that a water main break occurs because of Municipal Authority activities. However, any incident resulting in a water main being damaged and exposed to surface contaminants, no matter who is at fault (independent contractor, plumber, etc.), is cause for issuing a boil advisory while repairs are being made. A boil water advisory cannot be lifted until water samples (taken in the area of the repair on two consecutive days) test negative for total coliform bacteria. Total coliform tests must be performed by a State Certified Lab.

During a boil water advisory:

- Disinfect water by boiling at a rolling boil for one minute. If you are not sure what a rolling boil is, just boil the water for 5 minutes.
- Do not consume water that has not been disinfected - this includes ice or drinks made from tap water or raw foods rinsed with tap water that has not been disinfected.
- Use safe alternative sources of potable water (bottled, treated or distilled water) if boiling water is not practicable.
- Wash dishes in dishwashers that have a dry cycle or a final rinse that exceeds 113° F for 20 minutes or 122° F for 5 minutes or 162° F for 1 minute. Hand-washed dishes should be rinsed for one minute in a diluted bleach solution (1 tablespoon per gallon) and allowed to air dry.
- It is okay to wash clothes, bathe and shower.
- Use boiled or bottled water to brush your teeth.
- Provide pets with boiled water after it is cooled.

Upon rescinding of a boil water advisory:

- Run cold water faucets for 3 minutes each if they have not been used in the last 24 hours.
- Flush home automatic ice makers: make three batches of ice cubes and discard all three batches.
- Drain and refill your hot water heater if set at a low temperature (below 113° F).
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.