



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Woodford County
Health Department**

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BOIL ORDERS

The guidelines below will help residents and licensed food establishments during a boil order or temporary interruption of water service. Boil orders occur due to loss of water pressure (back-siphonage), contaminants found in drinking water, or a water main break. Boil orders are a precautionary measure used to ensure a safe (potable) water supply.

For licensed food establishments, it is your responsibility to follow the guidelines listed below for providing safe food products to the public.

When you first are notified of a boil order, contact the local health department and the appropriate water company. Licensed food service establishments may have to stop operations temporarily or permanently until the water service is functional or the boil order is lifted.

To continue operating under “boil water” orders or interrupted water service from municipal water supplies, all retail food service establishments (restaurants, grocery stores, bars, taverns, etc.) must secure and use potable water from an approved source (e.g., from tank trucks or bottled potable water) for all water usage. This includes for the following uses:

- 1.) Coffee, tea, other beverages made in the food establishment
- 2.) Ice
- 3.) Washing produce or thawing frozen foods
- 4.) Employees hand washing
- 5.) Washing all dishes and cooking utensils
- 6.) All water used in 3-compartment sinks
- 7.) All water for sanitizing solutions

It must be noted that equipment plumbed directly into the water system such as direct feed coffee urns, ice machines that manufacture ice on site, and post-mix soda or beverage machines may not be used during the boil order. Turn off all the water supply lines and all circuit breakers for your dish machine, ice machine, water dispensers, dipper wells, coffee makers, tea brewers, and soft drink machines. Post signage not to use these devices during the boil order.

If it is not possible to obtain potable water from tank trucks or bottled potable water and if a heat source is available, boil the water vigorously (water should be bubbling and rolling) for one minute (FDA, 2006).

After boiling the water vigorously for one (1) minute, the water should be cooled down before being used for coffee, tea, making ice, washing dishes, washing hands, etc. Label any containers of water with the date filled and “water”.

BOIL ORDERS

CONTINUED:

Retail food establishments may consider the following alternative procedures to minimize water usage:

- 1.) Commercially-packaged ice may be substituted for ice made on-site
- 2.) Single-service items or disposable utensils may be substituted for reusable dishes and utensils
- 3.) Pre-prepared foods from approved sources may be used in place of complex preparations on-site
- 4.) Restrict menu choices or hours of operation
- 5.) Portable toilets may be made available for sanitary purposes

After “boil water” order is lifted or water service resumes, these precautionary measures must be followed:

- 1.) Run all water lines for one minute to flush contaminated water from system. This includes each fill point for post-mix soda and beverage machines.
- 2.) Clean and sanitize all fixtures, sinks and equipment connected to water lines.
- 3.) Run your dishwasher empty through three complete cycles to flush the water lines and assure that the dishwasher is cleaned internally before washing equipment and utensils in it.
- 4.) Discard all ice in ice machines; clean and sanitize (1 tablespoon of bleach per gallon of potable water) the interior surfaces; run the ice through 3 cycles; and discard ice with each cycle.
- 5.) Replace all ice machine filters and beverage dispenser filters and flush all water lines for 10 to 15 minutes.

If you have any questions, please contact the Woodford County Health Department at 309-467-3064. If you have a public health emergency, please call 9-1-1. After normal business hours, if you have a public health non-emergency or immediate issue/concern, please call 309-467-2375 and ask for the public health administrator on call.