



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

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Guidance for Retail Food Establishments Under a Boil Order

Public water systems issue Boil Water notices to notify their users when the drinking water is not safe to consume. A boil water notice 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 20PSI; or when there is a waterborne disease outbreak.

The retail food establishment manager is responsible for conducting assessments to ensure compliance with food safety requirements.

The following are temporary measures that can be done when a retail food establishment is under a “boil order.”

Drinking Water

- Use commercially bottled water; or
- Use water that has been at a rolling boil for at least one minute; or
- Haul water 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, etc. using auto-fill methods

Ice Making

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

Cooking

- Use commercially bottled water; or
- Use water that has been at a rolling boil for at least one minute; or
- Haul water from an approved public water supply in a covered sanitized container

Handwashing

- Use commercially bottled water; or
- Use water that has been at a rolling boil for at least one minute; or
- Haul water from an approved public water supply in a covered sanitized container
- Handwashing must be done according to the Texas Food Establishment Rules at a minimum water temperature of 100 °Fahrenheit

Cleaning and Sanitizing Tableware and Utensils

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

Additional questions or concerns can be directed to the Food Establishments Group at (512) 834-6753.

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