

Guidelines for Food Establishments Under a Boil Water Advisory

All VDH food facilities are affected if there is a boil water advisory (BWA) in your area. [Contact your local health department](#) to learn how the BWA impacts your operations and if you can stay open.

During a BWA, a manager or person in charge shall:

1. Check the safety of the food, water, and ice;
2. Follow the guidance in this table or close until the BWA ends and the recovery steps are complete; AND
3. Follow all requirements for flushing lines and clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces prior to resuming normal operations when the BWA is lifted.

Safe water is only:

1. Commercially bottled water,
2. Hauled water from a waterworks regulated by the Office of Drinking Water (ODW) that is not under a BWA or from a private home. The water shall be transported in a covered, food-grade, sanitized container, **OR**
3. Boiled water
 - ➔ Boil water by bringing tap water to a rolling boil for **at least one minute** on a stovetop, in an electric kettle, or in a microwave using a microwave-safe container. For large amounts of water, make sure all parts of the water are at a full boil for one minute; this could take as long as 20-30 minutes depending on how much water and how big the pot is.

Use SAFE water to cook/ prepare food, ice, and beverages, clean food contact surfaces, and wash fruits and vegetables.	Making food with water Throw away any ready-to-eat food made with or touched by unsafe water. <i>Alternative:</i> Make ready-to-eat food with SAFE water.
Handwashing and Hygiene (Employees and Patrons) Only use SAFE water for handwashing. Set up a handwashing station with a container of warm water (85-100°F) that has a lever spigot, bucket to catch water, hand soap, and paper towels. Place these stations in all areas where food is handled and in all restrooms. Put up a sign telling customers not to use tap water for drinking or brushing teeth. <i>Alternative:</i> If you are only serving pre-packaged foods , you may use chemically treated towelettes. NOTE: An operational handwashing station must be provided for use in the immediate area of a toilet facility.	Utensil Washing and Cleaning Use only SAFE water to clean and sanitize equipment, utensils, and tableware in a three-compartment sink. "Wash" shall be at 110°F. Use proper sanitizer concentration: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Chlorine- 50 to 100 parts per million (ppm)▪ Quaternary ammonia (QUAT)- 200-ppm (or per the manufacturer label)▪ Iodine- 12.5-ppm <i>Alternative (strongly recommended):</i> use disposable, single-service utensils and tableware. NOTE: Do not use dishwashing machines connected to tap water.
Washing/soaking produce Do not use tap water; only use SAFE water. <i>Alternative:</i> Use pre-washed packaged produce or frozen/canned fruits and vegetables.	Thawing frozen foods Do not use tap water to thaw frozen foods; use only SAFE water. <i>Alternative:</i> Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave.
Making drinks with water Do not use equipment connected to tap water, such as post-mix drink machines, auto-fill coffee makers, or instant hot water heaters. <i>Alternative:</i> Make drinks with SAFE water.	Making Ice Do not make ice. Turn off ice machines and throw away existing ice. <i>Alternative:</i> Use store-bought ice.

Recovery Operations (Food, Lodging, & Camping) After a Boil Water Advisory

Only your permitted Virginia Public Waterworks or the Virginia Department of Health can say when a BWA has ended.

Flush pipes/faucets BEFORE DOING ANYTHING ELSE

Follow directions from your water authority, or use this general guidance (complete all 4 steps):

1. Run outside taps for about 10 minutes to bring fresh water from the main water line to your property.
2. Start with the cold-water faucet closest to where the water enters your building. Run all cold-water faucets for at least 5 minutes to bring fresh water into your plumbing. Begin on the lower floors and work your way to upper floors.
3. Remove and clean faucet aerators.
4. Flush hot water tanks.

These flushing steps are necessary even if the water was turned off during the BWA. Note: the water authority may direct that flushing is unnecessary due to the nature of the BWA.

Dishwashing

Clean and sanitize dishwashing machines, three compartment sinks, buckets, food contact surfaces, utensils, and other equipment before use.

Equipment

Flush, clean, and sanitize all equipment connected to tap water according to the manufacturer's instructions. Replace all filters.

Examples- post-mix beverage machines, spray misters, coffee or tea urns, ice machines, glass washers, dishwashers

Water filter systems

Replace filters in equipment such as water chillers, ice machine, etc.
Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.
Flush drinking fountains by running continuously for at least five minutes.

Fountain dispensers and soda guns

Run each beverage valve on every dispenser for at least four minutes.

Take off the dispensing nozzles and removable parts, then clean and sanitize them.

Clean and sanitize ice bins.

Food

Make sure all food is still within its use-by date. Throw away any food and drinks made with contaminated water.

Ice machines

Follow the manufacturer's instructions to flush and clean ice machines or have a service provider clean the equipment.

Example cleaning/sanitizing procedure:

- Throw out any remaining ice and replace any filters
- Flush the water line to the machine.
- Close the valve on the water line behind the machine and disconnect the water line from the machine.
- Open the valve, run water through the valve for 10-15 minutes, and dispose of the water.
- Close the valve, reconnect the water line to the machine inlet, and reopen the valve.
- Flush the water lines in the machine.
- Replace all filters not designed to be cleaned in place.
- Clean and sanitize all parts and surfaces that contact water/ice, following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Turn on the machine; throw away the first three batches of ice.

Guidelines for Lodging and Camping Establishments Under a Boil Water Advisory

All VDH-permitted establishments offering overnight accommodations are affected if a boil water advisory (BWA) is issued in your area. This includes hotels, motels, bed-and-breakfasts, hostels, summer camps, campgrounds, or RV parks. [Contact your local health department](#) to learn how the BWA impacts your operations and if you can stay open.

Lodging and camping facilities can stay open if they provide a SAFE drinking water source for guests.

Facilities that offer food or ice should follow the Emergency Guidelines for Food Establishments Under a Boil Water Advisory.

SAFE water is only:

1. Commercially bottled water,
2. Hauled water from a waterworks regulated by the Office of Drinking Water (ODW) that is not under a BWA or from a private home. The water shall be transported in a covered, food-grade, sanitized container, **OR**
3. Boiled water
 - ➔ Boil water by bringing tap water to a rolling boil for **at least one minute** on a stovetop, in an electric kettle, or in a microwave using a microwave-safe container. For large amounts of water, make sure all parts of the water are at a full boil for one minute.

The facility owner or operator must put up signs in the facility entrances, hotel/motel rooms, cabins, kitchens, front desk areas, and public restrooms with these instructions:

1. Do not drink tap water or use it to make coffee or baby formula, brush teeth, or bathe infants
2. How to get SAFE drinking water

<p>Handwashing</p> <p>It is recommended to use SAFE water (in a temporary or portable setup) for handwashing.</p> <p><i>Alternative:</i> Wash hands with soap and tap water and rinse well under running water. If available, use hand sanitizer or hand wipes with at least 60% alcohol.</p> <p>If handwashing is unavailable, patrons can also use hand sanitizer or alcohol wipes alone.</p>	<p>Personal Hygiene</p> <p><u>Only use SAFE water</u> to brush teeth.</p> <p>Adults, teens, and older children can shower or bathe, though they should avoid getting water in their mouth or swallowing the water. Infants and toddlers should be sponge bathed. Patrons should consult with their physician or health care provider for wound care instructions.</p>
<p>Pools and Hot Tubs/ Spas</p> <p>Keep pools and hot tubs/spas closed during a BWA unless the water authority says it's safe. When the BWA ends, let the system refresh all the water (one full turnover).</p> <p>It may be safe to stay open if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ There is no risk of harmful germs like cryptosporidium▪ The water is clear▪ Chlorine and pH levels are balanced to keep swimmers safe <p>For systems that need fresh water added regularly to run, test the disinfectant more often until the BWA ends.</p>	<p>Tap Water</p> <p>Tap water can be used for toilet flushing, floor cleaning with disinfection, and laundry.</p> <p>Patrons should follow the BWA on how to wash dishes in lodging facilities that have kitchens or kitchenettes.</p>