

Food Establishment Emergency Guide

No Water or Boil Water Order/Advisories



A food establishment Owner or Person-in-Charge is responsible for conducting both initial and ongoing assessments to ensure there is consistent compliance with food safety requirements even during a crisis situation. This document is designed to provide guidance in the development of emergency procedures for food establishments not having water or under a boil water order/advisory.

Individual food establishments can use these samples and resources in this document to develop procedures that meet the needs of their own specific business model.

Taunton Board of Health
45 School Street
Taunton, MA 02780
P: (508) 821-1400 F: (508) 821-1403





City of Taunton

Board of Health

45 School Street
Taunton, MA 02780-3212

BOARD MEMBERS
Dr. BRUCE E. BODNER
Dr. THADDEUS FIGLOCK
Dr. JOSEPH F. NATES

HEATHER L. GALLANT, MPH, RS, CHO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ADAM S. VICKSTROM
ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INTERRUPTION OF A WATER SUPPLY EVENT

WHAT IS AN INTERRUPTION OF A WATER SUPPLY?

An interruption of a water supply means that a food establishment's water supply has been disturbed and/or has stopped completely. In the event that a food establishment's water supply does not return or a potable approved water supply cannot be obtained, the food establishment must cease and desist all operations immediately.

HOW TO PREPARE - BEFORE AN EMERGENCY:

- Prepare an "emergency menu" in advance including recipes for food items that require no water or minimal amounts of water to prepare.
- Maintain an inventory of single-service and single-use articles to help get through reasonable time period. (*Cups, plastic silverware, single-use plates, etc.*)
- Maintain an inventory of bottled water.
- Maintain an inventory of disposable gloves and hand sanitizer. ***NOTE: You must have a way to wash your hands with soap and water during the duration of the interruption. *SEE HANDWASHING STATION SET-UP on Page 2.**
- Maintain an inventory of water filters / softeners for all your equipment.
- Develop a business agreement with a supplier of bottled water or a licensed drinking water hauler that will provide assurance that you will have an alternative source of water available during an emergency.
- Locate public water supplies in your area and points where containers can be filled with potable drinking water.
- Develop an emergency plan for toilets. If the water service is interrupted, where will you and your employees find toilet facilities available for use?
- Develop a business agreement with a supplier of ice in order to assure you that you will have access to ice during an emergency.
- Maintain contact information for people that can help you such as your plumber, water well drilling contractor, utility company, ice supplier, water supplier, water department, fire department, local health department, emergency broadcast station frequency numbers, etc. (***Example List on Page 8.**)
- Develop a list of equipment that uses water in your establishment and develop an emergency plan that describes what you would do if the water is interrupted.

DURING AN EXTENDED INTERRUPTION OF WATER:

An extended interruption of water service means that the **water service has been interrupted for two hours or more.**

❖ SINGLE EVENT

➤ **For single events affecting an individual establishment, the Owner or Person-in-Charge must:**

- *Note the date and time of water loss.*
- *Assess the operations affected. Immediately discontinue operation if a safe operation cannot be maintained using an alternative procedure.*
- *Immediately notify the Board of Health at the onset of the interruption, and*
- *Discuss appropriate emergency procedures if approved by the Board of Health or remain closed until granted approval to re-open by the regulatory authority. (i.e. Water Department.)*
- *Follow the appropriate emergency procedures if approved by the Board of Health or remain closed until granted approval to re-open by the regulatory authority. (i.e. Water Department.)*
- *In a widespread event when contact with the regulatory agency is not possible, immediately discontinue operations if a safe operation cannot be maintained using alternative procedures.*

❖ WIDESPREAD EMERGENCY

In the event of an imminent health hazard involving an interruption of water service, that affects numerous establishments, the Owner or Person-in-Charge shall:

- Conduct an evaluation of the operation as it relates to the hazard to determine if a safe operation can be maintained in accordance with applicable regulations.
- Close the establishment if a safe operation cannot be assured.
- If a safe operation can be assured, the establishment can remain open provided the appropriate Emergency Action Plan is approved by the Board of Health.

➤ **In the event of an emergency involving an interruption in water service, appropriate food establishment actions must be taken after an assessment of multiple factors, including but not limited to:**

- The complexity and scope of food operations,
- The onset and duration of the emergency event,
- The impact on other critical infrastructure and services; and
- The availability of alternative procedures that can be used to meet Food Code and Food Law requirements.

A food establishment Owner or the Person-in-Charge is responsible for conducting both initial and ongoing assessments to ensure consistent compliance with food safety requirements.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES DURING A WATER INTERRUPTION EVENT:

The following are temporary alternative procedures that can be taken to address specific affected food operations during an extended interruption of a water service.

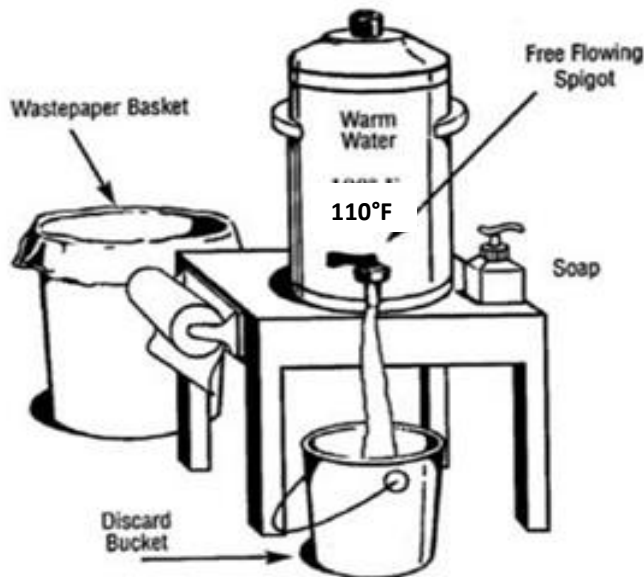
❖ **HANDWASHING:** No water to wash hands in food preparation area may result in contamination of food by employees.

- Potable water from an approved public water supply system can be placed into a clean, sanitized container with a spigot. Can be turned on to allow clean, warm water to flow over one's hands into a sink drain and/or bucket. Provide suitable hand cleanser, disposable towels, and a waste receptacle.
- Do not contact ready-to-eat food with bare hands. Use single-use gloves, utensils, and/or wax tissue.
- Chemically treated (wet nap) towelettes may be used for cleaning hands if the food items offered are **pre-packaged AND a handwashing facility is available** at the alternate toilet room location.
- Follow up with the FDA Food Code in order to be compliant in using hand sanitizer approved for use.

EXAMPLE OF A HANDWASHING STATION SET-UP IN A WATER EMERGENCY SITUATION:

At least one convenient handwashing facility must be available for handwashing on site **at all times**. This facility must consist of, at least, a container with potable running water (via spigot if sinks will not be utilized), a catch basket for wastewater, soap, individual single-use paper towels, and a trash container for disposal of paper towels. Employees must wash their hands at all necessary times during food preparation and service:

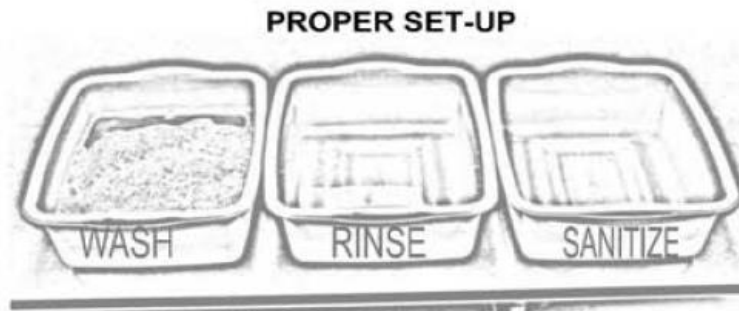
- Prior to starting food handling activities
- After using the restroom
- After sneezing, coughing, blowing your nose, eating, drinking, smoking or touching a part of the body
- After touching an open sore, boil or cut
- After handling money or soiled items
- After taking out the trash
- Any activity in which your hands become soiled.



- ❖ **TOILET FACILITIES:** A water interruption will result in inoperable restrooms for patrons and food employees.
 - Toilet rooms and or portable toilets with adequate handwashing facilities, which may not be conveniently located but are easily accessible to employees during all hours of operation, may be used until water service is restored.
 - Portable toilets with handwashing facilities.
 - **Discontinue operation if toilet facilities are not available.
- ❖ **DRINKING WATER:** Water used must be potable and from an approved source.
 - Use commercially bottled water.
 - Haul water from an approved public water supply in a covered sanitized container.
 - Arrange to use a licensed drinking water tanker truck.
- ❖ **COOKING – FOOD PREPARATION:** Water used must be potable and from an approved source.
 - Use commercially bottled water, water hauled from an approved public water supply in a covered sanitized container, or water from a licensed drinking water tanker truck.
 - Restrict the menu to items that don't require water.
- ❖ **ICE:** Water used must be potable and from an approved source.
 - Use commercially manufactured ice.
- ❖ **POST-MIX FOUNTAIN DRINKS**
 - Discontinue service.
- ❖ **CLEANING AND SANITIZING EQUIPMENT AND FOOD CONTACT SURFACES**
 - Use single-service/use articles.
 - Use commercially bottled water or water from an approved public water supply in a covered sanitized container. Water from a licensed drinking water tanker truck can also be used to clean and sanitize equipment and utensils. If water from an alternate source can be obtained, then follow established procedures to wash, rinse, and sanitize. Pre-scrape prior to washing as necessary.
 - Discontinue operations as inventories of clean equipment utensils, and tableware are exhausted.
 - Discontinue operations when cleanliness of the physical facility jeopardizes food safety.

EXAMPLE OF AN EMERGENCY WAREWASHING STATION SET-UP:

Facilities must have provisions available to wash, rinse, and sanitize multi-use utensils, dishware and equipment used for food preparation at the site. Proper chemical sanitizer and the appropriate chemical test kit must be provided and used at each site. All dishes and utensils must be air-dried.



PROPER SANITIZER CONCENTRATIONS

Chlorine
50 – 200 ppm*

Quaternary Ammonia
200 ppm*

Iodine
12.5-25 ppm*

* or as otherwise indicated by the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) or by the manufacturer of the product.

WHEN WATER IS RESTORED:

Recovery involves the necessary steps for reopening and returning to a normal safe operation. **A food establishment that was ordered or otherwise required to cease operations may not re-open until either the municipality or regulatory authority has lifted the Boil Water Notice or Advisory. Authorization then has to be granted by the local Board of Health prior to serving the public.**

❖ AFTER WATER SERVICE HAS BEEN RESTORED

- *Flush pipes/faucets: follow the directions from your water municipality such as those via television, radio, newspaper, fax, etc. or, as general guidance, run cold water faucets for at least 5 minutes.*
- *Equipment with waterline connections such as post-mix beverage machines, spray misters, coffee or tea urns, ice machines, glass washers, dishwashers, and other equipment with water connections must be flushed, cleaned, and sanitized in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.*
- *Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.*
- *Drain reservoirs in tall buildings.*
- *Change out all filters.*
- *Flush beverage machines.*
- *Flush drinking fountains: run continuously for 5 minutes.*

❖ ICE MACHINE SANITATION

- *Flush the water line to the machine inlet.*
- *Close the valve on the water line behind the machine and disconnect the water line from the machine inlet.*
- *Open the valve, run 5 gallons of water through the valve and dispose of the water.*
- *Close the valve.*
- *Reconnect the water line to the machine inlet.*
- *Open the valve.*
- *Flush the water lines in the machine.*
- *Turn on the machine.*
- *Make ice for 1 hour and dispose of the first batch of ice.*
- *Clean and sanitize all parts and surfaces that come in contact with water and ice, following the manufacturer's instructions.*

***Food Establishments that utilize water from their own Public Water System must follow the requirements of the **Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations (310 CMR 22.00)** as implemented by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

BOIL WATER ORDER / ADVISORY EVENT

WHAT IS A BOIL WATER ORDER / ADVISORY?

A boil water order is when local authorities determine that the safety of the water supply is an imminent health hazard when an onsite water supply has exceeded the maximum contaminant level for coliform bacteria and/or any other contaminant; thus the regulatory authority will issue a boil water order or an advisory. When this order or advisory is put into effect this means the water supply is not safe and could potentially harm someone if ignored. The water supply includes water for hand washing, ware washing, bathrooms, ice, and any hard plumbed equipment; such as coffee machines, dipper wells, etc.

HOW TO PREPARE BEFORE AN EMERGENCY:

In the event of an imminent health hazard involving contaminated water supply, the Owner or Person-in-Charge shall:

- *Note the date and time of water contamination.*
- *Assess the operations affected.*
- *Immediately notify the Board of Health at the onset of the interruption, and*
- *Implement the appropriate emergency procedures if approved by the Board of Health or remain closed until granted approval to re-open by the local Board of Health.*
- *In a widespread event, if contact with the regulatory agency is not possible, immediately discontinue operations if a safe operation cannot be maintained using alternative procedures.*
- *(i.e. cups, plastic silverware, etc.)*
- *Maintain an inventory of bottled water.*
- *Maintain an inventory of disposable gloves and hand sanitizer. ***NOTE: You must have a way to wash your hands with soap and water during the duration of the interruption. *SEE HANDWASHING STATION SET-UP on Page 2.***
- *Maintain an inventory of water filters / softeners for all your equipment.*

In the event of an emergency involving a contaminated water supply, appropriate food establishment actions must be taken after an assessment of multiple factors including but not limited to:

- *The complexity and scope of food operations,*
- *The onset and duration of the emergency event,*
- *The impact on other critical infrastructure and services; and*
- *The availability of alternative procedures that can be used to meet Food Code and Food Law requirements.*

A food establishment Owner or the Person-in-Charge is responsible for conducting both initial and ongoing assessments to ensure consistent compliance with food safety requirements.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES DURING A BOIL WATER ORDER / ADVISORY EVENT:

The following are temporary alternative procedures that can be taken to address specific affected food operations during a contamination of the water supply (boil water order/advisory). Where “boiled” water is indicated, the water must remain at a **rolling boil (212°F) for at least 5 minutes**. Although chemicals (e.g. bleach) are sometimes used for disinfecting small amounts of household drinking water, chemical disinfection is not an option for food establishments because of the lack of onsite equipment for testing chemical residuals. *** All water used must be potable and from an approved source.**

❖ DRINKING WATER

- *Use commercially bottled water.*
- *Haul water from an approved public water supply in a covered sanitized container.*
- *Arrange to use a licensed drinking water tanker truck.*

❖ BEVERAGES MADE WITH WATER— including post mix carbonated beverages, auto-fill coffee makers, instant hot water dispenser, juice, tea, etc.

Discontinue use of post-mix carbonated beverage machine, auto-fill coffee makers, instant hot water heaters, etc. using auto-fill. **Additional information for safe drinking water can be found at the following website:** www.epa.gov/ogwdw/faq/emerg.html.

❖ **ICE**

- Discard existing ice.
- Discontinue making ice.
- Use commercially manufactured ice.

❖ **PREPARING FOOD PRODUCTS REQUIRING WATER**

- Discard any ready-to-eat food prepared with water prior to the discovery of the contamination.
- Prepare ready-to-eat food using commercially bottled or properly boiled water.

❖ **WASHING / SOAKING PRODUCE**

- Use pre-washed packaged produce.
- Use frozen/canned fruits and vegetables.
- Wash fresh produce with properly boiled, commercially bottled water, or safe potable water hauled from a public water supply system.

❖ **THAWING OF FROZEN FOODS**

- Thaw only in the refrigerator or as part of the cooking process.

❖ **COOKING**

- Use commercially bottled water.
- Haul water from an approved public water supply in a covered sanitized container.
- Arrange to use a licensed drinking water tanker truck.

❖ **HANDWASHING**

- Use heated bottled water, properly boiled water, or potable water hauled from an approved public water supply.
- Potable water from an approved public water supply system can be placed into a clean, sanitized container with a spigot. Can be turned on to allow clean, warm water to flow over one's hands into a sink drain and/or bucket. Provide suitable hand cleaner, disposable towels, and a waste receptacle.
- Do not contact ready-to-eat food with bare hands. Use single-use gloves, utensils, and/or wax tissue.
- Chemically treated (wet nap) towelettes may be used for cleaning hands if the food items offered are **pre-packaged AND a handwashing facility is available** at the alternate toilet room location.
- Follow up with an FDA Food Code in order to be compliant in using hand sanitizer approved for use as an indirect food additive.

REFER TO PAGE 2 FOR AN EXAMPLE OF A HANDWASHING STATION SET-UP.

❖ **CLEANING AND SANITIZING EQUIPMENT AND FOOD CONTACT SURFACES**

- Use single-service/use articles.
- Use commercially bottled water or water from an approved public water supply in a covered sanitized container. Water from a licensed drinking water tanker truck can also be used to clean and sanitize equipment and utensils. If water from an alternate source can be obtained, then follow established procedures to wash, rinse, and sanitize. Pre-scrape prior to washing as necessary.
- Discontinue operations as inventories of clean equipment utensils, and tableware are exhausted.
- Discontinue operations when cleanliness of the physical facility jeopardizes food safety.

REFER TO PAGE 3 FOR AN EXAMPLE OF A WAREWASHING STATION SET-UP.

WHEN THE ORDER / ADVISORY HAS BEEN LIFTED:

Recovery involves the necessary steps for re-opening and returning to a normal safe food operation. A food establishment that was ordered or otherwise required to cease operations may not re-open until authorization has been granted by the Board of Health.

❖ **WHEN THE WATER SUPPLY IS SAFE TO USE, THE OWNER OR PERSON-IN-CHARGE MUST ENSURE THE FOLLOWING HAS BEEN COMPLETED**

- Flush pipes/faucets: follow the directions of your water utility (*in the newspaper, radio, or television*) or, as general guidance, run cold water faucets for at least 5 minutes.
- Equipment with waterline connections such as post-mix beverage machines, spray misters, coffee or tea urns, ice machines, glass washers, dishwashers, and other equipment with water connections must be flushed, cleaned, and sanitized in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.
- Drain reservoirs in tall buildings.
- Flush drinking fountains: run continuously for 5 minutes.

❖ **ICE MACHINE SANITATION**

- Flush the water line to the machine inlet.
- Close the valve on the water line behind the machine and disconnect the water line from the machine inlet.
- Open the valve, run 5 gallons of water through the valve and dispose of the water.
- Close the valve.
- Reconnect the water line to the machine inlet.
- Open the valve.
- Flush the water lines in the machine.
- Turn on the machine.
- Make ice for 1 hour and dispose of the first batch of ice.
- Clean and sanitize all parts and surfaces that come in contact with water and ice, following the manufacturer's instructions.

Food Establishments that utilize water from their own Public Water System must follow the requirements of the **Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations (310 CMR 22.00)** as implemented by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

Important Emergency Contact Information

*****Call 911 in emergency situations only.**

During all major weather or emergency events, please be sure to check www.taunton-ma.gov or call the **City of Taunton's Public Information line at #508-880-1514**.

*Now receive emergency messages directly on your smart phone. Just text "*follow tauntonema*" to 40404. Each time a message is sent out; you will receive a text message on your mobile phone. Messages are sent through Twitter. You do not have to have a Twitter account in order to receive the messages.

Owner	Phone#:
Manager / Person in Charge	Phone#:
General Manager / Operations Manager	Phone#:
Water Provider	Phone#:
Taunton Public Information Line	Phone#: 508-880-1513
Taunton Emergency Management Office	Phone#: 508-821-1026 Fax#: 508-880-1518
Taunton Board of Health Department	Phone#: 508-821-1400 Fax#: 508-821-1403
Taunton Fire Department	Phone#: 508-824-4024 Fax#: 508-821-1495 Alt. Phone#: 508-821-1452
Taunton Police Department	Phone#: 508-824-7522
Morton Hospital	Phone#: 508-828-7000
Department of Environmental Protection - Drinking Water Program, SE Region Office(Lakeville, MA)	Phone#: 508-946-2700
Mass DEP Drinking Water Program - List of Approved Emergency Bulk Water Providers	Phone#: (617) 556-1166
Road Closure Information	Phone#: 508-880-1513 or go to www.taunton-ma.gov . Click on Emergency Management at the bottom of the page.
Local Media Outlets	WVBF Radio 1530 AM WSAR Radio 1480 AM Comcast Channel 17 Verizon Channel 24

-- COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING BOIL WATER ADVISORIES --

1. What is the proper way to disinfect my water so that it is safe to drink?

The preferred method of treatment is boiling. Boiling water kills harmful bacteria and parasites (freezing will not disinfect water). Bring water to a full rolling boil for at least 5 minutes to 212°F to kill most infectious organisms.

2. How do I boil my water for an order/advisory?

- Fill a pot with water.
- Heat the water until bubbles come from the bottom of the pot to the top.
- Once the water reaches a rolling boil, let it boil for at least 1 minute.
- Turn off the heat source and let it cool.
- Pour water into a clean, sanitized container with a cover for storage.

3. How should I wash my hands during a boil water advisory?

Based on the current conditions of the affected public water supplies, vigorous hand washing with soap and your tap water is safe for basic personal hygiene. If you are washing your hands to prepare food, if at all possible, you should use boiled (then cooled) water or bottled water with hand washing soap.

4. How should I wash fruit and vegetables and make ice?

Fruits and vegetables should be washed with boiled (then cooled water) or bottled water. Ice should be made with boiled water, bottled water or sanitized water.

5. Why is the water unsafe for me to use and why should it be boiled?

Your water maybe contaminated by bacteria, virus, protozoa, or parasites. Contamination may be due to equipment failure, leaking/broken pipes in the system, insufficient disinfectant in the water supply. The Boil Water Order/Advisory gives you information so you can take action to protect your health.

6. When I turn on the faucet, the water sputters. Why?

You have air in your lines. Turn on your tap slowly and run the water until the sputtering stops.

7. Why does my water have a strong smell?

The smell is probably chlorine. Often, water systems will increase chlorine levels to disinfect the pipes.

8. What should I do if my water pressure is low?

Check the faucet screens for trapped particles. Remove the screens and clean out any particles. Put the screens back on the faucet.

9. Do I need to clean out my faucets?

Yes. You should flush your faucets after the drinking water advisory.

- Turn on the main water valve.
- Turn on the cold water tap at all faucets and run the water until you feel a change in temperature (i.e. the water gets noticeably colder). This may take several minutes. Begin with the faucet that is highest up in your home or building and then open the other faucets one at a time moving from the highest floor to the lowest.

10. Do I need to clean appliances?

Yes. Read the owner's manual for directions to clean appliances such as water softeners and filter units.

11. What if I have already consumed potentially contaminated water?

Even if someone has consumed potentially contaminated water from either a public water system or a private well before they were aware of the boil water advisory, the likelihood of becoming ill is low. Anyone experiencing symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, with or without fever, should seek medical attention.

12. What infectious organisms might be present in contaminated water?

Disease transmission from contaminated water occurs principally by ingesting water. The major organisms of concern are protozoa such as *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium*, and bacteria, such as *Shigella*, *E. coli* and viruses. These organisms primarily affect the gastrointestinal system, causing diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea, and vomiting with or without fever. Most of these illnesses are not usually serious or life threatening except in the elderly, the very young or those who are immunocompromised

RESOURCES USED:

MA Food Protection Program. "Guidance for Emergency Action Planning for Retail Food Establishments." May 2007.

www.taunton-ma.gov. "TEMA."

Centers for Disease Control. "Drinking Water Advisory Communication Toolbox." "Comprehensive List of Q&As for Boil Water Advisories." "FAQ About What to Do After a Drinking Water Advisory."

For more information, see or contact:

- **Personal Preparation and Storage of Safe Water:** CDC provides guidance on the amount of water needed for good health, as well how to prepare and store safe water before and during an emergency.
- **Hygiene and Handwashing:** CDC provides guidance on alternative hygienic practices when water is not available or is contaminated.
- **A Guide to Water Filters:** CDC maintains a guide for filters that remove *Cryptosporidium* or *Giardia*.
- EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791
- **Consumer Information:** EPA provides information and guidance about drinking water quality, emergencies, contaminants, public health issues, and treatment and storage.