

### **What should I do if a Boil Water Notice is in place?**

- Boil all water for consumption for at least one minute before use
- Turn your icemaker off and use boiled water in coffee machines
- Use boiled or bottled water or mouthwash to brush teeth
- Use boiled or bottled for baby formula

### **What is a Boil Water Notice?**

A Boil Water Notice is a precautionary notice used to safeguard health when the water supply may have been compromised. You may be asked to boil your water during an emergency or operational issue:

- if tests show that harmful micro-organisms could be present in the water
- if the water pressure drops due to equipment failure or power outages
- because of a break or repairs on a water main
- if the water source has been flooded or there is a significant inflow of stormwater
- at times of high turbidity in the source water (dirty water)
- during situations that warrant special action to protect consumers health.

A boil water notice does not mean that the tap water will make everyone seriously ill, but it does mean that the bacterial coliform level is higher than allowed in New Zealand Drinking-water Standards. It is possible that there may be harmful bacteria (pathogens) in the water.

### **How does boiling make my water safe?**

Boiling the water kills micro-organisms such as bacteria, viruses or protozoa that can cause disease. Boiling makes the tap water microbiologically safer.

### **How long should I boil the water?**

Bring tap water to a full rolling boil, let it boil for one minute and let it cool before using. Electric jugs with a cut-off switch can be used as long as they are full – allow the water to come to the boil and automatically switch off. Do not hold the switch down to increase the boiling time. Boiled water should be covered and allowed to cool in the same container.

If boiling water on your stove, use manageable sized containers and do not overfill them. Place container on a rear element if there are small children in the house. Let water cool before pouring it to another container.

### **Can I boil water in the microwave?**

Tap water can be boiled in the microwave using a microwave-safe container. Water should reach a full rolling boil for one minute. Place a microwave-safe utensil in the container to stop the water superheating (heating above boiling point without steam or bubbles).

### **Do I have to boil the tap water used to make beverages?**

Yes. Boil all the tap water you use for making coffee, tea, mixed drinks or any beverage made with water. All tap water used for making ice must also be boiled.

### **Should I boil tap water used to make baby formula?**

Yes. Use only bottled or cooled boiled tap water for mixing formula for your baby. Wash and sterilise bottles and teats by boiling or microwaving.

### **Do I need to boil water before using it to wash vegetables that will be eaten raw?**

Yes. Boil all tap water for washing raw vegetables.

**Should I boil the tap water used in cooking?**

All tap water used in cooking must first be boiled for one minute unless the cooking process involves boiling for one minute or more.

**Do I need to use boiled water for washing clothes or flushing the toilet?**

No.

**Should I boil tap water for brushing my teeth?**

Yes. Any tap water that might be swallowed should be boiled before use.

**Do I have to boil my dishwashing water?**

Dishes can be washed using boiled water. If using tap water, dishes washed with water and detergent should be rinsed in a bleach solution. (1 tablespoon unscented household bleach per 5 litres of water). Allow dishes to completely air dry.

You can wash dishes in an electric dishwasher, but be sure to use the hot setting (70°C or hotter) or the sanitisation function. If your dishwasher does not have these functions, dishes should be rinsed in a bleach solution. (1 tablespoon unscented household bleach per 5 litres of water). Allow dishes to completely air dry.

**Do I need to boil water for hand washing?**

You should either:

- Use bottled or boiled water for handwashing
  - No special soaps are necessary
- Use soap and tap water followed by an additional hand disinfection, by either:
  - Rinsing hands in disinfectant solution (add 1 teaspoon plain household bleach to 10 litres of water)
  - Using an alcohol-based hand sanitiser

**What about my bath water?**

There is no need to boil water for bathing or showering. You should avoid swallowing water or getting water in the mouth (avoid the face). Infants and toddlers should be sponge bathed. No special soaps are necessary.

Care should be taken to prevent water from getting into deep open or post-surgical wounds. Consult your doctor or health provider for wound care instructions.

**Do I still have to boil tap water if I have a water treatment device?**

Yes. Devices designed to improve the taste, odour, or chemical quality of the water, such as activated carbon filters, will not remove harmful micro-organisms from the tap water. Boil the tap water to make sure it is safe.

**Can I use bottled water instead of boiling tap water?**

Yes. Bottled water can be used for all situations where boiled tap water is recommended in this pamphlet. Be sure that the bottled water is from a reliable source.

**How will I know if a boil water notice is in place?**

- Regular broadcasts will be made on your local radio station
- Signs are placed in public places
- Ads are placed in your local newspaper
- Notifications appears on Council's website at [www.bdc.govt.nz](http://www.bdc.govt.nz)

**Further information on NZ drinking water standards, water use and sustainability can be found on the following sites: [www.codc.govt.nz/services/water-services](http://www.codc.govt.nz/services/water-services), [www.health.govt.nz/water](http://www.health.govt.nz/water), [www.drinkingwater.esr.cri.nz](http://www.drinkingwater.esr.cri.nz), [www.branz.co.nz](http://www.branz.co.nz), [www.waternz.org.nz](http://www.waternz.org.nz), [www.mfe.govt.nz](http://www.mfe.govt.nz), [www.dia.govt.nz/Three-waters-review](http://www.dia.govt.nz/Three-waters-review)**