DWR – DW – P – 06 – Boil Water Advisory Handbook - 07242026
Boil Water Advisory Handbook

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Effective Date: 07/24/2026

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REVISION HISTORY TABLE

Revision Number	Date	Brief Summary of Change
0	**07-24-2026**	**Initial Guidance Document**

Boil Water Advisory Handbook

A Guide to When and How to Issue a Boil Water Advisory



Department of Environment & Conservation

July 2026

References and Useful Links

- Rules for Public Water Systems https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/rules/0400/0400-45/0400-45-01.20190217.pdf
- Federal Public Notice Rule https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40/chapter-I/subchapter-D/part-141#subpart-Q
- EPA Public Notice Rule webpage https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/public-notification-rule
- EPA Revised Public Notification Handbook, March 2023 https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-05/CWS_NTNC%20PN%20Handbook_508_March%202023.pdf
- Georgia Boil Water Advisory Guidance Manual, 2020
- Kentucky Boil Water Advisory Guidance, 2014

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Introduction

Public water systems strive to deliver safe drinking water to customers under all foreseeable conditions. However, interruptions can occur and cause concerns regarding the safety of water provided to the public. Some interruptions, such as water main breaks, are commonplace. Other interruptions, such as treatment failures, are rare occurrences. Regardless of the frequency or likelihood of an event that compromises the delivery of safe water, the public water system should be prepared to notify the public and provide them with information on how they can protect themselves during these events if one were to occur. The Division of Water Resources (DWR) Drinking Water Program has developed this guidance document to:

- Clarify when a Boil Water Advisory (BWA) should be issued;
- Outline water quality sampling procedures to assure potable drinking water standards are met before lifting a BWA; and
- Address BWA content, distribution, and other considerations.

In their Manual of Water Supply Practices, the American Water Works Association summarizes the importance of BWAs well, noting that "[w]ater treatment professionals must regard public health protection as the highest priority. If a test result or condition exists that may breach the public health water quality standard, BWAs must be considered. Boil water advisories should be issued only after carefully evaluating the circumstances. Once the criteria to issue a BWA have been met, prompt action is necessary. Customer confidence may be eroded or elevated depending on the timeliness and accuracy of the information they receive."[1] The Department concurs with this view, and is making this guidance available to the regulated community to ensure that drinking water operators and water system staff throughout the state can make informed, timely decisions to issue BWAs when necessary to safeguard public health.

[1] AWWA, Manual of Water Supply Practices - M4, Waterborne Pathogens

Events which may trigger a BWA being issued may be roughly organized into three categories: (1) insufficient treatment, (2) low pressure or no pressure, or (3) contamination of the distribution system.

Water treatment requirements are established based on the type of source water and any additional risks associated with a specific source. When there is a failure of the treatment process, whether filtration, disinfection, or other processes, it is presumed that the water may potentially have contaminants that pose a risk to human health.

Water outages, as well as low water pressure, interfere with typical potable water uses (e.g. drinking, cooking, food preparation), and maintenance of sanitary conditions (e.g. bathing, hand washing, toilet flushing) within the home or business. In addition, the loss of positive pressure in a potable water pipe may allow disease-causing microorganisms from surrounding soil or groundwater to be drawn into the pipe, and thus into contact with the potable water due to pressure differences. Lastly, during the process of repair, contamination of potable water may occur if the interior surface of the pipe comes into direct contact with groundwater, surface water, or soil.

Contamination of the distribution system through back flow, compromised storage tanks, or other means can introduce disease-causing organisms directly into the water being delivered.

It should be noted that a BWA cannot adequately protect public health in all contamination events. Boiling is only effective against biological contamination. Boiling may intensify or concentrate certain other contaminants, making the situation worse. A “Do Not Consume”, “Do Not Contact”, or “Do Not Use” notice may be needed depending on the situation. Therefore, it is imperative that water systems work with Drinking Water staff from the local Environmental Field Office (EFO) when deciding whether a BWA is appropriate.

This document will be most relevant to community water systems, as most non-community water systems have limited distribution systems or have the option to shut down or restrict water use all together. However, this guidance handbook and the materials presented may be used by non-community water systems, as appropriate.

Any uncertainty regarding these guidelines and their applicability to a specific incident should be reviewed with staff from TDEC's Drinking Water Program in a timely manner[2] by contacting the local EFO Drinking Water staff. Discuss the situation with TDEC and any actions to be undertaken. If Drinking Water staff are unable to be reached, such as on nights and weekends, contact the Tennessee Emergency Management Authority (TEMA) State Watch Point 24/7 at 1-800-262-3300, TEMA.SWP@tn.gov, and inform them of the situation and the need to consult with TDEC Drinking Water Staff.

There are a variety of terms used when referring to boil water events. "Boil Water Advisory", "Boil Water Notice", or "Boil Water Order" are often used interchangeably by water system operators and state regulators alike. However, there are technical differences between each of the terms. A boil water **order** is a directive issued by TDEC to the public water system, requiring the utility to in turn distribute a boil water notice to its customers. A boil water **notice** is the public notification distributed by utilities informing the public of the need to boil water and providing other information to the public. A boil water **advisory** is essentially interchangeable with a boil water notice. Some consider an advisory more precautionary or voluntary where a notice is mandatory or specifically required by regulation. Whether it is called a notice or an advisory, both serve the same purpose— to inform the public of the need to take precautions.

This guidance document will use the term "boil water advisory" in reference to both an advisory and/or a notice. Whether precautionary or required by regulation, BWAs should contain the same information and be issued with the same urgency.

[2]Within eight (8) hours of the occurrence or sooner.

Section I

When to Issue a Boil Water Advisory

A water system may issue a boil water advisory any time that it chooses. It is never wrong to prioritize public health when in doubt. However, issuing a BWA when one is not warranted runs the risk of desensitizing the public and eroding customer confidence. State and Federal drinking water rules do not list every instance in which a BWA should be issued, as there are too many factors involved to make a comprehensive list. A BWA is often the result of considerable subjective judgement decisions made by system operators and State regulators.

System operators should always consult with Drinking Water staff any time there is a situation where they think a BWA may be needed. However, there may be times when a state regulator cannot be contacted in a timely manner. This guidance handbook should be used for determining if a BWA should be issued in those cases.

Instances that may warrant a Precautionary Boil Water Advisory

A BWA may be warranted for any of the following instances:

- A wide-spread loss of positive pressure occurs in the distribution system due to a power outage, pump failure or other system malfunction. When system-wide pressure or pressure over a large extent of the distribution system falls below 20 PSI, loss of positive pressure has occurred.
- Water main break with loss of positive pressure where contaminants may have entered the water main. In these instances, positive pressure is considered anything greater than zero. If the loss of positive pressure is limited to the pipe, section, or area flushed or disinfected, then a BWA may not be necessary. However, if the area depressurized is larger than the area treated, then a BWA should be issued.

- Water main break where positive pressure has been maintained but there are other compounding factors that indicate the potential for contamination, i.e. creek crossings, flooded trench, proximity of sewer lines, etc.[3]
- Failure of the disinfection process which results in a free chlorine residual concentration of less than 0.2 mg/L in the water entering the distribution system for more than 4 hours. Consideration may be given to occurrences where there is a dedicated transmission main leaving the plant leading directly to a water tank and distribution system chlorine residuals are maintained versus water mains that connect directly customer taps.
- Failure to maintain a free chlorine residual of at least 0.2 mg/L in all parts of the distribution system and has not been restored within four hours of detection.
- Water outages or loss of service which last longer than eight hours.

Strong consideration should be given to issuing a BWA in the following cases:

- Breaks impacting a school[4], daycare, or preschool.
- Breaks impacting a hospital, nursing home, dialysis clinic, or other health care facilities.
- Breaks in a remote part of the system which cause delay and difficulty finding or isolating the break.
- Breaks in a low elevation segment of a hilly area where some residents will have pressure loss/water outage.
- Breaks adjacent to older or damaged sewer lines.

Instances that require a Tier 1 Public Notice

Events which present an immediate risk to public health require that the BWA be issued within 24 hours as a Tier 1 Public Notice to alert customers to unsafe conditions and notify them of actions they should take.

[3] A Water Main Break Issuance Flowchart is provided in Appendix A. The flowchart may be a useful resource in determining if a BWA needs to be issued in response to a water main break.

[4] Some utilities make this a policy, but prior consultation with the Board of Education involved is recommended.

A Tier 1 Public Notice is **required** to be issued for incidences including, but not limited to

- Presence of *Escherichia coli (E. coli)* in finished water, during routine sampling in the distribution system or in repair sampling after a dewatered repair;
    - When confirmed by any repeat sample being *E. coli* or total coliform positive;
    - Upon first detection when any other information indicates water may be unsanitary; or
    - Upon failure to take all required repeat samples after an *E. coli* positive routine sample.
- Presence of fecal indicators in raw groundwater at systems that do not provide 4-log treatment of viruses.
- Turbidity exceedances in finished water that pose an imminent threat to public health. Turbidity exceedances that are considered an imminent threat to public health are sustained combined filter effluent turbidity readings greater than 1 NTU for 6 or more hours OR a confirmed turbidity level greater than 5 NTU unless the turbidity is attributable to other circumstances unrelated to filter malfunction (i.e., iron or manganese particles). *A BWA is NOT warranted for iron and manganese problems as these issues are chemical rather than biological in nature.*
- Occurrence of a waterborne disease outbreak associated with the public water system or other waterborne emergencies. A waterborne emergency is a situation that does not meet the definition of a waterborne disease outbreak but still has the potential to have serious adverse effects on health as a result of short-term exposure. These could include outbreaks not related to treatment deficiencies, as well as situations that have the potential to cause outbreaks, such as failures or significant interruption in water treatment processes, natural disasters or other disturbances that disrupt the water supply or distribution system, or unexpected loading of possible pathogens onto the source water.[5]

[5] Rules for Public Water Systems, 0400-45-01-.19 Appendix A endnote 20

Section II

Issuing a Boil Water Advisory

When the decision is made to issue a boil water advisory, it must be done quickly and comprehensively. The notice must meet certain content and delivery requirements. Various regulatory and public health agencies must be notified, as well.

If a large proportion of the population served does not speak English, the BWA should be translated into the language(s) commonly spoken by system customers. The Public Notice Rule requires that the notice must, at a minimum, contain information in the appropriate language(s) regarding the importance of the notice, or it must provide a phone number or address where a translated notice or information or assistance in the appropriate language is available. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has resources available for any language barriers and translations in multiple languages. Information can be found on the EPA's website www.epa.gov. Specifically, Information for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency, https://www.epa.gov/lep, and Processes for Assisting People with Limited English Proficiency, https://www.epa.gov/ogc/assisting-people-limited-english-proficiency, can be found by clicking the links provided. Specific questions can be asked by using EPA's Contact Page and more information will be provided.

Content of the Boil Water Advisory

Water systems should consult the EPA Public Notice Handbook for recommended content and delivery practices.

When a BWA is issued as a required Tier 1 Public Notice, the Public Notification Rule must be followed. As best practice, DWR recommends that all BWAs, including those issued as precautionary or voluntary, adhere to the requirements of the Public Notice Rule.

The Public Notice Rule requires the following 10 elements to be included in any Tier 1 Public Notice:

1. Description of the violation or situation, including the contaminant(s) of concern, and (as applicable) the contaminant level(s).
2. When the violation or situation occurred (e.g., date the sample was collected or was supposed to be collected).
3. Any potential adverse health effects from the violation or situation, using standard language for health effects provided in Appendix B to Rule 0400-45-01-.19 or for monitoring or testing procedure violations provided in Rule 0400-45-01-.19(5)(d)(2).
4. The population at risk, including subpopulations, that may be particularly vulnerable if exposed to the contaminant in their drinking water.
5. Whether alternate water supplies should be utilized.
6. Actions consumers should take, including when they should seek medical help, if known.
7. What the system is doing to correct the violation or situation.
8. When the system is expected to return to compliance or resolve the situation.
9. The name, business address, and phone number, or those of a designee of the PWS as a source of additional information concerning the notice.
10. A statement encouraging notice recipients to distribute the notice to others, where applicable, using the standard language given in Rule 0400-45-01-.19(5)(d)(3).

Where a BWA is issued for a limited area, such as for a line break or loss of pressure over a specific portion of the distribution system, the BWA should describe the affected area(s) as precisely as possible by clearly defining the boundary of the affected area using local landmarks or roadways to provide clear information to customers. A map can help clarify what areas are under the BWA in some situations. System wide BWAs should not be issued when the area affected is limited in size.

In summary, a BWA should tell customers:

- What happened;

- When it happened;
- Who is potentially affected;
- What the potential health effects are;
- What they need to do to protect themselves;
- What is being done to resolve the situation;
- How long it might last; and
- Who they can contact for more information.

Various examples of Boil Water Advisories are included in Appendix A.

Distribution

Water system customers should be informed as quickly as possible when a BWA has been issued so that they can begin taking immediate steps to protect their health. The notice must be delivered in a way that will reach all persons served. Water utility leaders should use at least one or more communication methods to reach customers. Possible delivery methods include:

- Broadcast media, such as radio and television;
- Hand delivery, such as door hangers in the affected area;
- Automated notification services, such as reverse 911 or other services;
- Posting in conspicuous locations throughout the affected area; and
- Other appropriate methods approved in writing by the department.

Methods such as social media, utility webpages, or email can be extremely effective ways to distribute the notice but may not be effective by themselves. Internet and social media postings are encouraged, but are not acceptable as a sole delivery method because they require the public to know to look for the posting. Email notification can be effective in certain situations, such as issuing a BWA for a precise population of users, such as a university, business, or factory. Before relying solely on social media, utility webpages, or email, discuss the situation with the local EFO Drinking Water staff to determine the most appropriate methods for notifying affected customers.

Where water outages have occurred due to extensive damage to the distribution system, it is recommended that a BWA be issued to the affected customers before water service is restored.

Notification and Reporting

After the decision to issue a Boil Water Advisory has been made, various government agencies should be notified. The water system should notify the Division of Water Resources Drinking Water Program immediately. A copy of the BWA, as issued, should be emailed to the local EFO. Every effort should be made to make direct contact with Drinking Water Program staff from the local EFO so that the Department is aware of the situation and able to respond accordingly. If Drinking Water Program staff are unavailable, the utility should contact the Tennessee Emergency Management Authority (TEMA) State Watch Point 24/7 at 1-800-262-3300, TEMA.SWP@tn.gov and inform them that a BWA has been issued for their utility.

It is recommended that the utility notify the local health department, as well as the local county Emergency Management Agency (local EMA), to appraise them of the situation. These agencies may be called to respond as dictated by their own directives and protocols. It is also suggested that the utility directly notify any affected schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and health care facilities to provide them with a copy of the Boil Water Advisory.

A water system may find it useful to develop a written Boil Water Advisory action plan before a BWA is needed. The plan should include:

- BWA content requirements;
- All state and local government agencies to be notified;
- Critical users to be notified such as schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and health care facilities;
- Plans for distributing the notice; and
- Pre-populated templates covering various scenarios.

Lifting the Boil Water Advisory

Water quality testing is an essential component in determining when it is appropriate to lift the advisory when a BWA is in effect. Since the circumstances in each situation where a BWA is issued are different, no one set of procedures is appropriate in all cases. The utility should consult with the local EFO Drinking Water staff to determine the type and minimum number of tests that need to be conducted.

When BWAs are issued as a result of a line break, loss of pressure, or no pressure, the following are generally considered adequate water quality parameters to demonstrate the integrity of the system has been restored and the BWA can be lifted: bacteriological sampling, free chlorine residual monitoring, and system pressure monitoring. The distribution system should be sufficiently flushed to remove excessive air from the water lines and eliminate water that was or that might have been contaminated.

The number and location of bacteriological samples and free chlorine residual measurements should be adequate to represent the population served, as well as the configuration and size of the area affected. All bacteriological tests must be performed by a certified laboratory.

The table below provides generic recommendations for a minimum number of bacteriological samples to collect based on the number of connections affected by the BWA. A situation may call for more than the recommended number of samples to be collected. For example, an area with fewer connections but a larger service area and number of branches may require just as many, or more, samples as compared to an area smaller in size with a greater density of connections. Consult with the local EFO Drinking Water staff when planning the number and location of samples to be collected.

Table 1

Number of connections affected by the BWA	Minimum number of samples to collect
15 – 400	3

Number of connections affected by the BWA	Minimum number of samples to collect
401 – 1,000	4
1,001 – 1,500	5
1,501 – 2,000	6
2,001 – 5,000	10
5,001 – 10,000	25
10,001 – 25,000	50
>25,000	As recommended by TDEC

Distribution system pressure should be stable throughout the affected area. Often a leak may not occur until sometime after pressure has been restored to the previously dry water main. Pressure readings in an area that has a total or significant loss of pressure do not necessarily have to be at normal pressure for the area but should be better than half of the normal pressure for that area of the distribution system and above 20 psi. Water tanks should have adequate volume and show consistent gains.

Where a BWA is triggered by a failure of the treatment process, cross connection, waterborne disease outbreak, or other situation the system must consult with DWR staff to determine an appropriate course of action for lifting the BWA.

All bacteriological samples collected should be negative for total coliform. When positive results are isolated to specific sections of the distribution system, it may be acceptable to lift the BWA for only the portions of the distribution system returning negative results.

Only after consultation with DWR staff and all criteria established have been satisfactorily demonstrated may the Department concur that lifting of the BWA is appropriate or warranted. The water utility should then issue an “all clear” or “problem corrected” notice using the same methods used to issue the original advisory. A copy of the notice lifting the BWA should be sent to the local EFO Drinking Water staff.

If the BWA is issued as a required Tier 1 Public Notice, a Public Notice Delivery Certification Statement is required to be submitted to the local EFO. An example Public Notice Delivery Certification Statement is included in Appendix A.

Appendix A

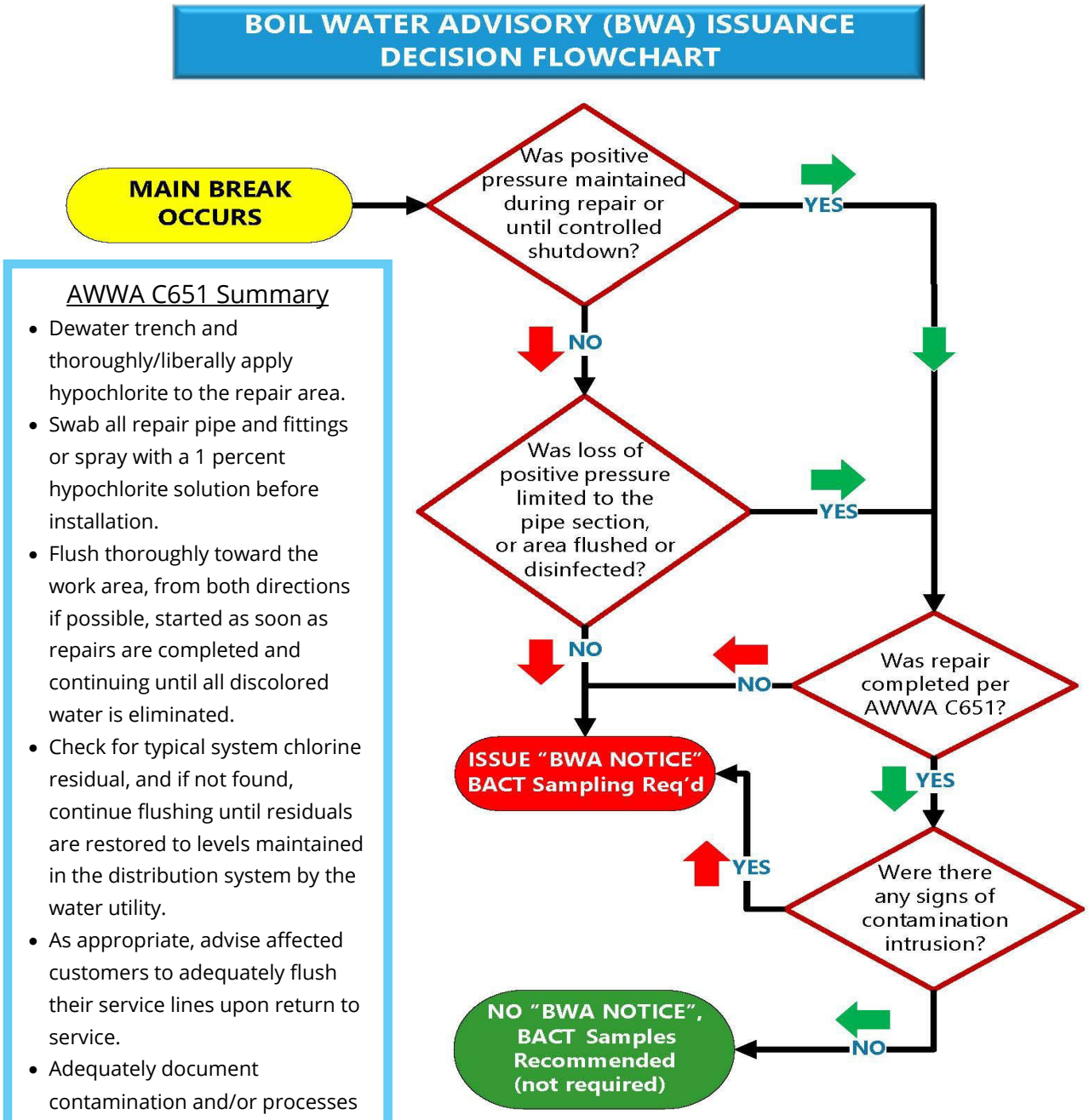
Boil Water Advisory Issuance Decision Flowchart

Boil Water Advisory Issuance Decision Readout

Example Line Break Boil Water Advisory

Example Turbidity Boil Water Advisory

Example E. coli Detected Boil Water Advisor



AWWA C651 Summary

- Dewater trench and thoroughly/liberally apply hypochlorite to the repair area.
- Swab all repair pipe and fittings or spray with a 1 percent hypochlorite solution before installation.
- Flush thoroughly toward the work area, from both directions if possible, started as soon as repairs are completed and continuing until all discolored water is eliminated.
- Check for typical system chlorine residual, and if not found, continue flushing until residuals are restored to levels maintained in the distribution system by the water utility.
- As appropriate, advise affected customers to adequately flush their service lines upon return to service.
- Adequately document contamination and/or processes used for disinfection.

Text Alternative: Boil Water Advisory Issuance Decision Flowchart

Start: Main Break Occurs

1. Was positive pressure maintained during the repair or until a controlled shutdown?

If Yes: Continue to Question 3.

If No: Continue to Question 2.

2. Was the loss of positive pressure limited to the pipe section, or was the area flushed or disinfected?

If Yes: Continue to Question 3.

If No: Issue BWA Notice. BACT sampling required.

3. Was the repair completed per AWWA C651?

If Yes: Continue to Question 4.

If No: Issue BWA Notice. BACT sampling required.

4. Were there any signs of contamination intrusion?

If Yes: Issue BWA Notice. BACT sampling required.

If No: No BWA Notice. BACT samples recommended but not required.

AWWA C651 Summary

- Dewater the trench and thoroughly/liberally apply hypochlorite to the entire repair area.
- Swab all repair pipe and fittings or spray with a 1-percent hypochlorite solution before installation.
- Flush thoroughly toward the work area, from both directions if possible, beginning as soon as repairs are completed and continuing until all discolored water is eliminated.
- Check for typical system chlorine residual. If it is not found, continue flushing until residuals are restored to the levels maintained in the distribution system by the water utility.
- As appropriate, advise affected customers to adequately flush their service lines when service is restored.
- Adequately document contamination and/or processes used for disinfection.
- See AWWA C651 for a complete description.

Below is an example notice.

DRINKING WATER WARNING

[*System*] Water System Customers

BOIL YOUR WATER BEFORE USING

The [*system*] Water System has experienced a line break which has resulted in a significant loss of pressure in the drinking water system. As a precautionary measure we are asking customers [*identify specific area if applicable]* to boil water before using for consumption. We apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience while we work to resolve this problem.

What does this mean? What should I do?

- **DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT BOILING IT FIRST.** Bring all water to a boil, let it boil for one (1) minute (*3 minutes at high altitude*), and let it cool before using, or use bottled water. Boiled or bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, and food preparation until further notice. Boiling kills bacteria and other organisms in the water.

- Water main breaks resulting in a loss of system pressure can introduce disease-causing organisms into the water system. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites, which can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches. The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice.

- People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly may be at increased risk. These people should seek advice from their health care providers about drinking water.

What is being done?

The [*system*] Water System is actively making repairs. Once system pressure is restored, bacteriological tests will be conducted throughout the system. We will inform you when tests show no bacteria, and you no longer need to boil your water. We anticipate resolving the problem within [*projected timeframe for resolution*].

For more information, please contact [*system*] at [*phone number*] or [*mailing address*]. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available the EPA Ground Water and Drinking Water Website at https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water.

> *Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.*

This notice is being sent to you by [*system*] Water System.

State Water System ID#: _____ Date distributed: _____

Below is an example notice.

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DRINKING WATER WARNING

[*System*] Water System has high turbidity levels

BOIL YOUR WATER BEFORE USING

We routinely monitor your water for turbidity (cloudiness). This tells us whether we are effectively filtering the water supply. A water sample taken [*date*] showed turbidity levels of [*number*] turbidity units. This is above the standard of [*standard*] turbidity unit. Because of these high levels of turbidity, there is an increased chance that the water may contain disease-causing organisms.

What should I do?

- **DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT BOILING IT FIRST**. Bring all water to a boil, let it boil for one (1) minute (*3 minutes at high altitude*), and let it cool before using, or use bottled water. Boiled or bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, and food preparation **until further notice**.

- *Turbidity has no health effects. However, turbidity can interfere with disinfection and provide a medium for microbial growth. Turbidity may indicate the presence of disease causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites, which can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches.* People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly may be at increased risk. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers.

- The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice. People at increased risk should seek advice from their healthcare providers about drinking this water.

What happened? What is being done?

[*Briefly describe detail what happened that led to the high turbidity measurements.*]

This Boil Water Advisory is being issued out of an abundance of caution. We are currently testing the water to determine the extent of any potential contamination. We will inform you when you no longer need to boil your water.

For more information, please contact [*system*] at [*phone number*] or [*mailing address*]. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from or the EPA Ground Water and Drinking Water Website at https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water.

> *Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.*

This notice is being sent to you by [*system*] Water System.

State Water System ID#: _____ Date distributed: _____

Below is an example notice.

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DRINKING WATER WARNING

***E. coli* is present in [*water system name*] water**

BOIL YOUR WATER BEFORE USING

(*Briefly describe the situation, such as: "E. coli bacteria were found in the water supply on [give date]" or "We did not perform required testing of the water system and must assume that E. coli bacteria are in the water as of [give date]*). These bacteria can make you sick and are especially a concern for people with weakened immune systems.

Bacterial contamination can occur when increased run-off enters the drinking water source (for example, following heavy rains). It can also happen due to a break in the distribution system (pipes) or a failure in the water treatment process.

What should I do? What does this mean?

- **DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT BOILING IT FIRST.** Bring all water to a boil, let it boil for one (1) minute (*3 minutes at high altitude*), and let it cool before using, or use bottled water. Boiled or bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, and food preparation until further notice. Boiling kills bacteria and other organisms in the water.

- **E. coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Human pathogens in these wastes can cause short-term effects, such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a greater health risk for infants, young children, the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems. **

- The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice. People at increased risk should seek advice from their healthcare providers about drinking this water.

What is being done?

[*Describe corrective action*]. We will inform you when tests show no bacteria are present and you no longer need to boil your water. We anticipate resolving the problem within [estimated timeframe].

For more information, please contact [*system*] at [*phone number*] or [*mailing address*]. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from the EPA Ground Water and Drinking Water Website at https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water.

> **Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail. **

This notice is being sent to you by [*system*] Water System.

State Water System ID#: _____ Date distributed: _____

EXAMPLE

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Below is an example notice.

DRINKING WATER PROBLEM CORRECTED

Customers of [*system*] were notified on [*give date*] of a problem with our drinking water and were advised to [*describe recommended action*]. We are pleased to report that the problem has been corrected and that it is no longer necessary to [*describe recommended action*]. We apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience.

[*Add further details here when appropriate.*]

Flush your water lines.

- Turn on your cold water tap on each faucet and run for two minutes
- Start with the faucet at the highest point in your home or building. Move lower and lower one at a time.
- Clean any particles from your faucet's aerator. You can typically unscrew these to clean them using your fingers or a wrench and then rinse them off before screwing it back into place.
- Change the filter cartridge in your refrigerator or ice maker. Throw out any ice and flush the water dispenser for 3 to 5 minutes. Run the ice maker for 1 hour and throw away any ice made during that time. Wash the bin area.
- It is not necessary to empty your hot water heater.

As always, you may contact [*system name*] at [*phone number*] or [*mailing address*] with any comments or questions.

> *Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.*

This notice is being sent to you by [*system*].

State Water System ID#: _____ Date distributed: _____

EXAMPLE

Below is an example notice.

Certification Requirements

The Public Notice Rule requires a public water system, within 10 days of completing the public notification requirements of the initial public notice and any repeat notices, to submit to the State a certification that it has fully complied with the public notification regulations. This notice must be kept on file for three years. A PWS must include with the certification a representative copy of each type of notice distributed, published, posted, or made available to the people served by the system and to the media (e.g., press release to TV/radio, mail notices). A sample certification "box" with appropriate language, suitable for checking off required activities as a PWS completes them is provided below. Although a certification is mandatory, this example is only one suggested format. The box is not mandatory (only a statement is); however, it is a useful tool for tracking and noting required activities.

Sample Certification Statement

PWS Name: _____ *[system name]* _____

PWS-ID #: _____ *[PWS number]* _____

For Violation: _____ *[describe violation or situation]* _____

occurring on: _____ *[insert date]* _____

The public water system indicated above hereby affirms that public notice has been provided to consumers in accordance with the delivery, content, and format requirements and deadlines in [regulatory citation].

□ Consultation with primacy agency (if required) on _____ *[insert date]* ___.

□ Notice distributed by _____ *[insert method]* _____ *on* ___ *[insert date]* ___.

□ Notice distributed by _____ *[insert method]* _____ on ___ *[insert date]* ___.

□ Content - 10 elements