

WATER ADVISORY FAQ

Ohio public water systems are required to continually monitor for contaminants. Under certain circumstances, residents are publicly notified with instructions to boil the water, or in some cases, not to use the water for a period of time until tests show there are no contaminants in the water. It is important for residents to understand the advisories and pay close attention to the directions offered.

What does it mean when a *BOIL ADVISORY* is issued and under what circumstances will it occur?

The City's Water Department will put a boil advisory in effect for two reasons. The first and most typical reason is if a water main break occurs and there is potential for contamination in the area of the break. In this case, the advisory is a precaution and will be in effect until bacterial sampling can occur for the predetermined areas. Once a water main break has been repaired, the City is required to take water samples from the area of the break and have them tested for contaminants. These tests take 24 to 48 hours dependent on weekends, holidays etc. Once the results prove negative for any contaminant, the City will lift the advisory. If a contaminant is detected the City will extend the advisory. New samples will be tested until the contaminant has been removed from the system.

The second, and most rare, reason an advisory would be issued is if a contaminant is detected during the routine testing the City performs on the entire water system. If this is the case, the City will issue a boil advisory for the entire system until the source of the contaminant is determined and until it is proven that the contaminant has been removed from the system.

If the City's Water Department issues a *BOIL ADVISORY* does it mean the water is unsafe to drink?

If a boil advisory is issued, residents should assume the water is unsafe to drink because of the potential contamination. It is important to follow the advisory directions because of the potential contamination.

How long should the water be boiled to adequately kill disease-causing microorganisms?

Under a boil advisory, it is advisable to bring the water you will use for drinking, cooking, and all usage related to consumption to a rolling boil for three minutes.

Are there alternatives to boiling water?

Yes, residents may choose to use bottled water while the boil advisory is in effect. In some cases boiling water is NOT advised. Boiling the water will not remove sodium, nitrates, and other inorganic chemicals from water. It may increase the concentration of these contaminants.

What is a "*NO USE*" ADVISORY?

A "no use" advisory would be issued notifying residents that they should not use the water for drinking, cooking, and all personal hygiene usage even after boiling. This type of notice remains in effect until the City's Water Department notifies residents that the water is acceptable for consumption and other uses.

How will residents know if a *BOIL ADVISORY* is in effect?

There may come a time when we find it necessary to issue a boil advisory for portions of our City. If the area is reasonably small, notification is given to customers by house to house door tags. If the area affected is large and it is not possible to deliver door tags, the City of Urbana will advise news media, and if applicable "Code Red" Notification.

How will residents know when a *BOIL ADVISORY* is lifted?

The same means of notification that was used to issue the Advisory will be used to lift it.

What is the difference between an *ADVISORY, WARNING, or ORDER*?

An Advisory is a strong recommendation. A Warning or Order is a MANDATE. Under a Warning or Order, contamination has been identified as present and not simply "may be present".