

**Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner
Boil Water Questions and Answers**

1. Why has a precautionary boil water advisory been issued for my neighborhood?

During some water system repairs or replacements, the water system serving your premises may be temporarily depressurized. Whenever a water system loses pressure, there is the potential for contaminants to enter the system.

2. When is it safe to cook, wash, drink and clean with the water?

After the boil water advisory has been lifted. You can wash and clean with the water under a boil water notice (see #3 below) without boiling it first.

3. Is it safe to shower under a boil water advisory?

Yes, unless you have an open wound, etc. that could let bacteria into your body.

4. Is it safe to brush your teeth under a boil water advisory?

You should use boiled water.

5. Is it safe to wash the dishes in a dishwasher or by hand under a boil water advisory?

Use heat dry in the dishwasher - pour hot boiled water over hand washed.

6. How long should you boil the water?

The water should reach a rolling boil and boil for 5 minutes.

7. Do you have to let it stand after you boil the water, why?

You should let it stand for about 15 minutes to minimize the chance of burning yourself.

8. Why is the water milky or discolored? What should you do to get rid of the discoloring? Is it safe to use this water?

If the water is a milky/cloudy color and clears in a few minutes when put it in a glass (from the bottom up), then it is air in the water. Air in the water is an aesthetic issue and not a drinking water health concern. You can help by flushing your lines, starting with the outside hose bibb closest to where the service line enters your home. Flush outside about 15 minutes, then flush your inside faucets, etc. for a few minutes each.

9. When trying to flush your water lines, does it matter if you are running the inside taps or the outside? Should you drain your hot water heater?

See #8 for flushing. You do not need to drain your hot water heater for a "precautionary boil water advisory" as you shouldn't drink or cook with water drawn from your hot water tap.

10. What can be done when there is air in the water lines?

See #8.

11. Are there any precautions to take when you have low water pressure?

No, but you may want to put water some away in case you lose all water pressure.

12. Does the use of bleach purify your water? How much bleach? (Under a boil water notice, can you use bleach to disinfect your water without boiling it first)?

Yes, when boiling is not practical, chemical disinfection should be used. You can use bleach to disinfect drinking water. See below for Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommendations.

Chlorine Bleach: Common household bleach contains a chlorine compound that will disinfect water. The procedure to be followed is usually written on the label. When the necessary procedure is not given, find the percentage of available chlorine on the label and use the information in the following tabulation as a guide.

Available Chlorine	Drops per Quart of Clear Water
1%	10
4-6%	2
7-10%	1

(If strength is unknown, add ten drops per quart of water. Double amount of chlorine for cloudy or colored water). The treated water should be mixed thoroughly and allowed to stand for 30 minutes. The water should have a slight chlorine odor; if not, repeat the dosage and allow the water to stand for an additional 15 minutes. If the treated water has too strong a chlorine taste, it can be made more pleasing by allowing the water to stand exposed to the air for a few hours or by pouring it from one clean container to another several times.

For Additional Information:

Please call the North Water Maintenance Team of the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office at 248-858-4310 (Monday-Friday; 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) or 248-624-6366 (outside of business hours). Please visit our website at www.oakgov.com/water for frequently asked boil water questions and answers.