

Boil Water Notice Fact Sheet

December 2013

What are total coliforms and E. coli bacteria?

Total coliforms are a group of bacteria used to indicate possible contamination of drinking water. Total coliforms include a group of bacteria known as E. coli, which are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. All samples are tested for total coliform bacteria and E. coli bacteria.

What is a boil water notice?

A boil water notice is a public notice that the water purveyor must issue to all affected consumers within 24 hours of notification of a positive E. coli result. The boil water notice remains in effect until the affected tap and associated repeat samples (up- and downstream) samples are total coliform negative.

A boil water notice can be averted if the water purveyor has collected repeat samples, and these repeat samples are known to be total coliform negative, before the 24-hour deadline has passed. This means that the water purveyor must have collected repeat samples no later than the time that the results of the first sample become known.

How should the boil water notice be delivered?

The *area affected* by the boil water notice is determined by the water purveyor and the SDWB based on the location of the sampling points and the results of the routine and repeat sampling. The *way* in which the notice is delivered depends upon the best means of reaching the consuming public. For smaller systems, it may be most effective to deliver notices door to door. In larger systems, electronic media, press releases, etc. may be faster and more effective. It is the purveyor's responsibility to ensure all affected consumers are notified. For each system, the appropriate method for issuing the boil water notice must be approved by the SDWB. A copy of the boil water notice must be sent to the SDWB.

What should the boil water notice say?

The notice should describe the consumer areas which are affected. It should advise consumers to boil water vigorously for 1 minute prior to drinking or using for cooking. It should include the name and phone number of a contact person from the water purveyor for persons to call with questions.

SAMPLE BOIL WATER NOTICE

Date: [redacted]

To: Consumers of the [redacted] water system

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

and until further notice

DO NOT DRINK WATER FROM YOUR TAP

The [redacted] water system learned on date that it exceeded the state standard for E. coli bacteria. You are notified to boil your water vigorously for 1 minute prior to drinking or using for cooking. You can also seek alternative water sources.

Call the [redacted] office or water system contact person at phone number if you have any questions.

[redacted]
Water system manager's name or contact person