



## **BOIL WATER NOTICES**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **1) What does a Boil Water Notice mean?**

- A Boil Water Notice is issued when a health risk is determined in the drinking water source. The RDCK and Interior Health recommend boiling the water prior to consumption or drinking a safe alternative such as bottled water

#### **2) How do you boil your water during an advisory?**

- Fill a pot with water and bring water to a rapid, rolling boil for **1 minute or longer**.
- The water should then be refrigerated and stored in a clean, covered container

#### **3) Why do I have to boil my water?**

- Your water may be contaminated by bacteria, virus, and/or parasites. Boiling water kills these pathogens

#### **4) How can I improve the taste of boiled water?**

- Pour cooled boiled water back and forth from one container to another to aerate the water
- Allow the water stand for a few hours.

#### **5) Can I use tap water to brush my teeth?**

- No. Do not brush your teeth with untreated water. Use boiled or bottled water

#### **6) How do you wash your dishes during an advisory?**

- Initially, wash your dishes with hot water as normal. After washing dishes, sanitize them by soaking them for at least 2 minutes in bleach solution (mix 10 mL bleach with 5 L water).
- If your dishwasher has a hot temperature or sanitizer cycle, you can wash your dishes as normal. If not, please sanitize your dishes as above.

#### **7) What should I do about preparing food and beverages? How should I wash fruit, vegetables, and food preparation surfaces?**

- Wash fruit, vegetables, and food preparation surfaces with boiled water that has cooled or bottled water
- Bring water to a boil for 1 minute or longer before using it for cooking
- Use boiled water that has cooled when preparing coffee, tea, juices, and infant formula.

#### **8) What about shaving?**

- Yes, you can shave as usual

**9) Is it safe to take a shower or bath?**

- Yes, it is safe to take a bath or shower, but be careful not to swallow any water. Use caution when bathing babies or young children. Consider giving them a sponge bath to reduce the chance of them swallowing water

**10) What about doing laundry?**

- It is safe to use the water to do laundry

**11) Can I use my coffee maker, ice machine, or soda dispenser?**

- Do not use water from any appliance connected to your water lines. This includes water and ice dispensers in your refrigerator. Most kitchen filters typically do not remove or kill all bacteria or viruses.

**12) I already drank the water. Will I get sick?**

- Most people who happen to drink this water will not get sick. If you do get sick, the symptoms are similar to food poisoning: nausea, diarrhea, cramps, and possibly mild fever.

**13) What should I do if I have symptoms?**

- The most important thing to do is to avoid dehydration. Drink plenty of fluids and avoid drinks with caffeine. If you are concerned about your health or the health of a family member, please contact your doctor or visit your local healthcare clinic.

**14) Do you develop immunity to water-borne illnesses over time by drinking poor quality water?**

- This is a common misconception. Most studies show that people do **NOT** develop complete immunity to water-borne parasites such as *Cryptosporidium*, *E.coli*, and *Giardia*. People with weak immune systems such as children, the elderly, people with chronic diseases (such as diabetes), and patients with other illnesses are especially vulnerable.

**15) Should I give my pets boiled water?**

- Pets are prone to the same diseases as people. It's a good idea to also give pets boiled water that has cooled as well.

**16) Is it safe to water my garden and house plants?**

- It is safe to use tap water for your household gardens

If you have any questions please contact the RDCK at 250-352-6665 or check out our website at [www.rdck.bc.ca](http://www.rdck.bc.ca).

For further information, please contact:

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Note: Adapted from *Drinking Water Advisory Communication Toolbox (February 2013) US Environmental Protection Agency and Centre for Disease Control*