

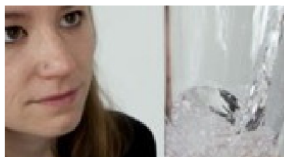
# CONSUME SAFE DRINKING WATER DURING AN EMERGENCY

Available in English & Spanish



Fact Sheet  
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Water directly out of your tap may not be safe to drink during an emergency. Boil water orders (also called advisories) are common during hurricane season, but can also occur during lightning strikes and other incidents. Boil water orders, when issued, are a precaution we must take seriously. Bacteria, viruses, and protozoans can enter the drinking water supply and can make you sick. This can be a serious health hazard, and we must be alert to warnings issued by local authorities. When a **boil water order**, is issued for your area, you need to limit exposure to contaminated water. Microbiological contaminants (bacteria) can be waterborne and can make you sick.

## CONTAMINATED WATER IS A THREAT TO PUBLIC HEALTH

These are recommendations for boiling, disinfecting and/or filtering water, when one of these boil water incidents occur:

### BOILING WATER

If you do not have a supply of safe bottled water, you should boil your water to make it safe to drink. Boiling water is the most effective method to kill disease-causing organisms, including: viruses, bacteria, and parasites.



### FILTERING WATER

Many portable water filters can remove some disease-causing parasites from drinking water. Just like disinfecting water, you must carefully read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for the water filter you choose.



### DISINFECTING WATER

If you do not have bottled water available and if boiling is not possible, you can disinfect small quantities of water, to drink, by using a chemical disinfectant such as unscented household chlorine bleach. Disinfectants can kill most harmful or disease-causing viruses and bacteria, but not all of them. There are specific details on how to disinfect water and the manufacturer's instructions must be followed carefully and exactly! See the CDC link below on making water safe to drink.

## WHAT ABOUT LAUNDRY, HANDWASHING, BATHING, DISH WASHING, BRUSHING TEETH, CLEANING, AND CARING FOR PETS, THE GARDEN AND HOUSE PLANTS WHEN A BOIL WATER ORDER IS IN EFFECT?

See the boil water advisory. Start here: [Making Water Safe During An Emergency \(English\)-Make Water Safe During an Emergency \(Print-only\) \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/making-water-safe.html). (Spanish)- [Haga que el agua sea segura durante una emergencia \(Print only\)](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/making-water-safe.html). Visite la página [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

### WHEN A BOIL WATER ADVISORY IS ISSUED, HERE ARE TEN CONSIDERATIONS TO HELP YOU STAY SAFE.

1. Water may not be safe to drink during an emergency; listen to your local authorities and follow all recommendations and boil water advisories.
  2. Stay tuned to the local news for advisory updates in your area. Follow these recommendations closely.
  3. Use bottled water if possible. If not, use one of the methods described to make water safe to drink.
- Important note:** Always follow the manufacturer's directions when disinfecting or filtering water.
4. Consider using disposable plates, cups, and utensils during a boil water advisory.
  5. You may need to brush your teeth with bottled water.
  6. Be careful not to swallow water when showering.
  7. Pets can also get sick from some of the same germs as people and spread germs to people. Provide pets with bottled drinking water or cooled boiled water.
  8. Food and water safety matters. Remember the basic food safety principles of clean, separate, cook, and chill.
  9. Prevent illness in your community by following local advisories and being knowledgeable about safe drinking water.
  10. Know how to protect yourself and your family when a boil water advisory is issued. Always drink safe water.



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### REFERENCES

- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).
- **Topics:** Healthy Water | CDC. Link: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/making-water-safe.html>. See also [Making Water Safe-Make\\_Water\\_Safe\\_Flyer\\_508.pdf \(cdc.gov\)](#) & [A guide to water filters: A Guide to Water Filters | Cryptosporidium | Parasites |](#)
- CDC Boil water advisory-Boil Water Advisory | Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene-related Emergencies & and Outbreaks | Healthy Water