

TITLE:	Boil Water Advisory	POLICY #:	XVIII-O-10.00
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MANUAL	Emergency Management	APPROV. AUTH:	Administrator
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PAST REVISIONS:			
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Boil Water Advisory Policy #: XVIII-O-10.00

POLICY:

A boil water advisory is a notification that the drinking water supply may be contaminated with pathogenic microorganisms, and that drinking the tap water can make residents, team members, and visitors sick. Boiling the tap water destroys pathogens and makes the water safe to drink and use.

In the event of a boil water advisory, the Home will use boiled water, bottled water, or water from another safe public supply not affected by the advisory, and will follow procedures as indicated for personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitizing, and preparing food, including ensuring handwashing is followed by use of alcohol-based hand rub. The Home will contact the Public Health Unit that issued the boil water advisory for more information as needed.

Do not use tap water to:

- Drink
- Prepare foods
- Make juice
- Make ice
- Wash fruits or vegetables
- Brush teeth
- Give to pets or animals in pet therapy programs

PROCEDURE:

The Incident Manager (RN in Charge) or designate will:

- 1) Ensure all team members, residents, families, and visitors are made aware of a boil water advisory in effect and when it is over.
- 2) Follow Support Services Emergency Fan out.
- 3) Ensure alternate sources of water are provided to residents, team members, and visitors that is safe for drinking.

The Infection Prevention & Control Lead or designate will:

- 1) Post signage at entrance to the location and at all faucets, including the kitchen area, washrooms, and hand sinks, as a reminder that a boil water advisory is in effect and that the water is not safe to drink. See XVIII-O-10.00(d) Boil Water Advisory Signage.

- 2) Post signage advising team members, residents, and visitors to apply alcohol-based hand sanitizer (to be available in all washrooms and at all sinks) after normal handwashing procedures with warm tap water and paper towels. See XVIII-O-10.00(e) Boil Water Advisory Handwashing Signage.

The Manager of Building Services or designate will:

- 1) Disconnect all drinking water fountains, soda dispensers with post-mix service, and ice making machines from the affected water supply.

The Housekeeping Team will:

- 1) Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer, containing at least 70% alcohol, in all public and team member washrooms and at all standalone hand sinks.
- 2) Reference XXVII-O-10.00(b) Cleaning & Sanitizing Practices During a Boil Water Advisory.

The Manager of Food and Nutrition or designate will:

- 1) Discard any ice and beverages that may have been prepared with the affected water supply and sanitize ice cube trays.
- 2) Direct team to prepare boiled water as needed:
 - a. Bring water to a rolling boil for at least one minute.
 - b. Use an electric kettle if possible.
 - c. Only boil as much water as you can safely lift without spilling.
 - d. If boiling water on the stove, place the pot on the back burner.
 - e. Take all precautions as needed to avoid burns.
- 3) If providing bottled water, check with Public Health Unit about brands of bottled water or water dispensers considered to be safe / that are produced in locations not affected by the boil water advisory.
- 4) Reference XXVII-O-10.00(c) Preparing Food During a Boil Water Advisory.

The Nursing Team will:

- 1) Use boiled water that has been cooled to room temperature, or use sterile water, to wash broken skin and wounds and for other resident care activity (note: commercial bottled water is not sterile).
- 2) Consider using sterile bottled, boiled, or otherwise disinfected drinking water for severely compromised residents.
- 3) Discuss with physician/NP any special precautions that may be needed for residents with weakened immune systems.
- 4) Reference XXVII-O-10.00(a) Personal Hygiene During a Boil Water Advisory.

NOTE: Water filtration devices cannot be relied on to make tap water safe to drink or cook with. Do not use water unless it has been boiled first.

When the Boil Water Advisory has ended:

The Maintenance Team will:

- 1) Flush all water-using fixtures and faucets by running them for five minutes (if your service connection is long or complex, consider flushing for a longer period of time).
 - a. In multi-storey buildings, begin on the top floor, flushing each fixture and faucet for five minutes. Once every fixture and faucet has been flushed for five minutes, proceed to the next floor below; continue the procedure until all fixtures and faucets on all floors are flushed.
- 2) Ensure equipment with water line connections, such as refrigerators and ice dispensers, are drained, flushed, cleaned, and disinfected according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

The Manager of Building Services or designate will:

- 1) Flush, drain, clean, and disinfect cisterns that contained the affected water source.
- 2) Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- 3) Replace the filters on any water filtration devices, and flush the fixture according to manufacturer's directions.
- 4) Drain and refill hot water heaters that have been set below 45°C/110°F.

The Incident Manager (RN in Charge) or designate will:

- 1) Communicate to all team members, residents, and visitors that the Boil Water Advisory has ended.
- 2) Complete Emergency Prep-Actual Event-Test-Drill Evaluation Form.
- 3) Keep Administrator or designate notified.

The Infection Prevention & Control Lead or designate will:

- 1) Remove signage.

Reference:

How to Use Water Safely in Long Term Care Facilities, Supportive Living and Home Living Sites During a Boil Water Advisory: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-water-safely-ltc-bwa.pdf>

How to Use Water Safely in Your Food Establishment During a Boil Water Advisory: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-water-safely-food-establishment-bwa.pdf>

Boil Water Advisory: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/drinking/drinking-water-advisories/boil-water-advisory.html>

Guidance for Issuing and Rescinding Boil Water Advisories in Canadian Drinking Water Supplies:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/guidance-issuing-rescinding-boil-water-advisories-canadian-drinking-water-supplies.html>

Best Practices for Hand Hygiene in All Health Care Settings:

https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/B/2014/bp-hand-hygiene.pdf?sc_lang=en

Attachments: XXVII-O-10.00(a) Personal Hygiene During a Boil Water Advisory
XXVII-O-10.00(b) Cleaning & Sanitizing Practices During a Boil Water Advisory
XXVII-O-10.00(c) Preparing Food During a Boil Water Advisory
XVIII-O-10.00(d) Boil Water Advisory Signage
XVIII-O-10.00(e) Boil Water Advisory Handwashing Signage