



Boil Water Advisory FAQ – Residential Customers

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Why is there a boil water advisory?

Our water distribution system experienced periods of low pressure and outages due to main breaks. Periods of low or no pressure in the distribution system increases the potential for introduction of bacteria into the water system.

Is the water safe?

Because of the situation, boiling water is a precaution until testing can be completed and confirm it is safe.

Who is impacted?

All PWC water customers should boil their water until further notice.

Are Spring Lake & Fort Bragg included in this advisory?

Yes. Spring Lake water customers are also under the advisory as PWC supplies water to them. Spring Lake issued water advisories to their customers Saturday night (Jan. 6, 2018) as a precaution. As of 5 pm Sunday, Jan. 7, 2018, Fort Bragg has also issued a boil water advisory. Fort Bragg was receiving water from Harnett County until this afternoon when it became necessary to switch to the PWC water supply.

I am an Aqua customer. Does this advisory apply to me?

Yes if you live in these neighborhoods: Brettenwood Hills, Brookwood South, Kelly Hills, Rain Tree II, and Stoney Point. Aqua issued water advisories to their customers Saturday night as a precaution.

How long do I need to boil it?

The [Centers for Disease Control](#) recommend 1 minute (after water begins to boil).

Should I boil all the water or just what I plan to drink?

Any water you will consume through drinking, cooking, making ice, and brushing teeth, should be boiled. Using boiled water for hand washing is only necessary for food preparation and eating activities. In lieu of using boiled water for hand washing, you may use bottled water or a hand sanitizer after washing.

Will a home water filter substitute for boiling water?

No.

Is it safe to take a bath or shower?

Yes. Be careful not to swallow any water. Use caution when bathing babies and young children. Consider giving them a sponge bath to reduce the chance of them swallowing water.

Can I use my dishwasher?

Yes. Water temperatures in a residential dishwasher are high enough to be considered safe to use under a boil water advisory.



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We already drank the water, cooked, etc., how do we know we will be ok?

The boil water advisory was issued as a precaution because of the loss of pressure in the system. There has been no confirmation of contamination and tests are being conducted at this time.

Do we have to boil the water for our pets?

No.

I am on dialysis. How does this affect me?

The [Centers for Disease Control](#) recommend 1 minute (after water begins to boil). You may also want to contact your health professional for additional information.

When I turned on my water there was a lot of air in the line or I had discolored water. There were also particles floating in it. What caused that? Is it safe to use if I experience any of these issues?

The loss of pressure in the system causes air to get in the line and the discolored water is most likely caused by the flushing of the water system (open fire hydrants) as the system is stabilized and put back in service. The particles are most likely sediment that has been dislodged by the reversal of normal flows and the multiple main breaks. It is safe to use the water.

How long will the boil water advisory last?

The boil water advisory will remain in effect until further notice. It typically takes 48-72 hours to do appropriate testing of the system and confirm the water is safe. However, testing cannot begin until the system stabilizes and flood waters where testing points are located have receded.

What type of contamination are you testing for?

Total and fecal coliform.

What is the difference between total coliform and fecal coliform?

Coliforms are bacteria which are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially-harmful, bacteria may be present. Usually, coliforms are a sign that there could be a problem with the treatment or distribution system (pipes). Whenever we detect coliform bacteria in any sample, we do follow-up testing to see if other bacteria of greater concern, such as fecal coliform or *E. coli*, are present.

Fecal coliforms and *E. coli* are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a special health risk for infants, young children, some of the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems. The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in contaminated drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms that persist, you may want to seek medical advice.

Are restaurants and other public places following these same guidelines?

Essentially they are following the same guidelines. The Cumberland County Health Department provides detailed guidance for food service establishments and notifies all restaurants of appropriate action when there is a boil water advisory.



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I've heard rumors that the water isn't safe to drink and restaurants are being shut down. Is that true?

We will notify customers if our water is contaminated. The Cumberland County Health Department provides detailed guidance for food service establishments and notifies all restaurants of appropriate action when there is a boil water advisory. You may contact the Health Department at 433-3600.

Is there anything I should do to my water after the advisory is lifted?

If no contamination is found, customers can resume using their water as usual. No flushing of your water lines, ice maker, etc, is necessary. If contamination is found, a new advisory with guidelines will be issued.

How will I know when it's no longer necessary to boil the water?

PWC will notify its customers through the local media, PWC website, social media and messages on its main customer service (483-1382) and emergency line (1-877-OUR-PWC1).

Does PWC have to report this issue to any agency?

PWC works under the guidance of the NC Department of Environmental Quality Public Water Supply Section to issue advisories and ensure all proper steps are taken to insure customers are safe. PWC works in cooperation with the Cumberland County Health Department to notify local restaurants of this advisory.

I have a well. Does this advisory apply to me?

This advisory pertains to PWC water customers.

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