

Boil Water Advisory

What is a boil water advisory?

A boil water advisory is a public statement advising customers to boil tap water before consuming it. Advisories are issued when an event has occurred allowing the possibility for the water distribution system to become contaminated. An advisory does not mean that the water is contaminated, but rather the possibility exists.

What are the reasons for issuing a boil water advisory?

There are a few reasons why the Harkers Island Sanitary District (HISD) might issue a boil water advisory.

1. If any untreated water reaches the distribution system.
2. If there is loss of pressure in the system, or in a large portion of the system.
3. There is a water main break where dirt, debris, or other objects may have entered the distribution piping.

What should you do during a boil water advisory?

You should boil tap water vigorously for at least one full minute prior to using it for drinking or cooking. This includes water used for brushing teeth, making ice, washing raw foods, preparation of drinks, and water for pets. Boiling removes harmful bacteria in the water that may cause illness. You should throw away ice made during the time the advisory was issued, since freezing does not kill bacteria.

If you have a filter on your faucet or refrigerator, you should still boil your water. Most point of use filters are designed to improve the taste and odor of water, not to remove harmful bacteria.

It's not necessary to boil water for other household purposes, such as showering, laundry, bathing, or washing dishes.

How long will you have to boil water?

During a boil water advisory, Harkers Island Sanitary District is performing laboratory testing to determine if the water meets all standards and is safe to drink. Once this testing is complete and the quality and safety of the water is assured, the boil water advisory will be lifted.

If testing were to indicate the presence of harmful bacteria, the boil water advisory would be extended. During such an extension, Harkers Island Sanitary District would be performing more tests to continually monitor water quality, and the boil advisory would be lifted when the quality and safety of the water is assured.

After an advisory has been lifted, you should flush faucets used for drinking, ice makers, water fountains, etc., prior to using them for cooking or drinking. Flushing means let the water run to ensure that no contaminated water remains in your pipes, usually 15 minutes. Remember to replace the ice in your ice maker.

It is important to note that Harkers Island Sanitary District is continually performing laboratory testing on the water system throughout Harkers Island. Our first priority is the safety and health of our customers, and we constantly monitor water quality to ensure a safe drinking water supply.

Is this the same as a boil water order or boil water notice?

No, an advisory is voluntarily issued by Harkers Island Sanitary District strictly as a precaution and when there is no indication of any contamination. A boil water order or boil water notice is required by law when there is some type of contamination and laboratory testing has confirmed the presence of bacteria.

When HISD issues a boil water advisory, we also notify local health department officials and the North Carolina Public Water Supply (PWS). Throughout the process, we keep them informed of the situation, and work with them to ensure that all safeguards are in place and that the public's health and safety is assured. However, it is important to note that we continually work with local and state agencies such as PWS throughout the year to stay current on all requirements and provide our staff with the most up to date training available to equip them with the necessary knowledge and tools to operate the system in the most effective, safe manner possible.

Harkers Island Sanitary District is taking a more proactive approach when we issue an advisory, which is not a requirement. We believe that the safety and health of our customers is our most important responsibility. By keeping them informed of the status of our water distribution system, we are working together with them to ensure that they have a safe, reliable water supply.