



## Southern 7 Health Department *Environmental Health*

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### RETAIL ACTIONS DURING BOIL WATER ORDERS OR INTERRUPTED WATER SERVICE

Boil orders are posted by water companies when a break, repair or some other event results in loss of pressure or introduction of contaminants into a water line. Loss of pressure or possible introduction of contaminants may allow pathogen presence and/or growth in the water line that could result in human illness. The size of the affected area is determined by the number of buildings served by that line. The water in the line must be tested for safety after repairs are made, usually resulting in a minimum of 48 hours before the boil order restrictions are lifted. Under boil order guidelines:

- Water used in food preparation shall be boiled at least 3 to 5 minutes or obtained from an alternate, approved source not affected by the boil order. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Water for coffee, tea, other beverages, or water added to any food
  - Water for washing produce, or water used to thaw frozen foods
  - Water to be used for employee hand washing
- Water fountains, soda fountains, coffee makers, ice machines and any other equipment with plumbed water **shall not** be used until the boil order is lifted and start-up procedures are completed. Ice shall be discarded.
- Dishwashing machines shall not be used until the boil order is lifted and start-up procedures completed. Dishes may be washed in the three compartment sink using boiled or potable water from an approved source. Use your test kit to ensure proper concentrations. Detergent may affect the concentration of your sanitizer.

**To continue operating under “boil water” orders or interrupted water service from municipal water supplies**, all retail food service establishments (restaurants) must secure and use potable water from an approved source, e.g., from tank trucks or bottled potable water, for all water usage. This includes the following uses:

1. Coffee, tea, and other beverages made in food establishment
2. Direct feed coffee urns plumbed directly into the water system
3. Post-mix soda or beverage machines
4. Ice machines that manufacture ice on the site
5. Washing produce or thawing frozen foods
6. Employee hand washing
7. Washing all dishes and cooking utensils

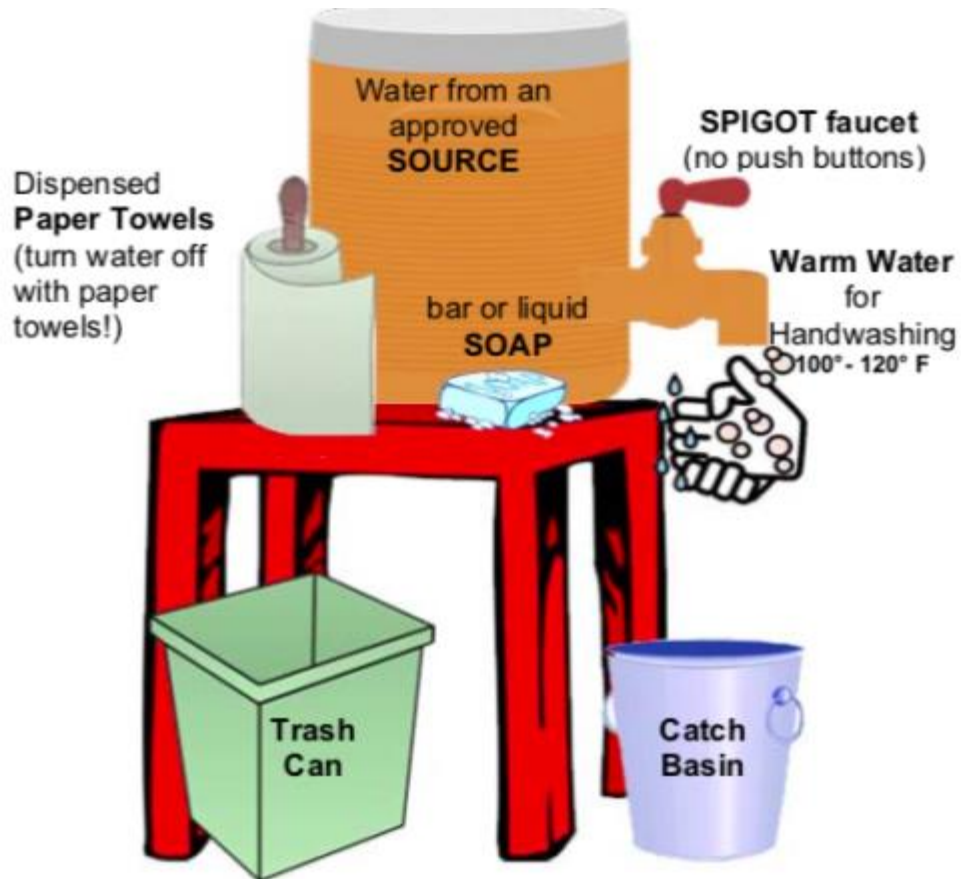


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8. All water used in 3-compartments sinks
9. All water for sanitizing solutions
10. Water for mechanical dishwashers

Temporary handwashing station should be implemented during a boil water order in order to avoid washing hands with contaminated water. Example below of a temporary handwashing station.



**Water cooler should be filled with water that has been boiled for 3-5 minutes first or with a potable water source that is not affected by a boil water order.**

**Retail food establishments may consider the following alternative procedures to minimize water usage.**

1. Commercially-packaged ice may be substituted for ice made on site
2. Single-service items or disposable utensils may be substituted for reusable dishes and utensils
3. Pre-prepared foods from approved sources may be used in place of complex preparations on site
4. Restrict menu choices or hours of operation
5. Portable toilets may be made available for sanitary purposes

**After the “boil water” order is lifted or water service resumes, the following measures shall be implemented for start-up of food service equipment:**

1. Run water through all faucets for 10 minutes. Then initiate the following procedures.
2. Purge equipment of contaminations.
  - A. MECHANICAL DISHWASHING EQUIPMENT – Operate the machine in a manner to provide a complete filling and emptying of the machine through four (4) cycles. Detergent should be supplied in a normal manner. Booster heaters need not be operated to maintain machine temperatures.
  - B. ICE MACHINES – Completely remove all ice and standing water from the machine. Allow the machine to operate, in a normal manner, until the holding bin has reached 50% capacity. The resulting ice must be discarded. Thoroughly wash and sanitize the holding bin, using “safe water.”
  - C. LINE-FED COFFEE MAKERS – Operate the machine until it has filled four (4) times. Thoroughly wash and sanitize all accessible parts, using “safe water.”
  - D. ALL OTHER BEVERAGE DISPENSERS – Flush all equipment until four (4) times the volume of all lines involved has been discarded. Thoroughly wash and sanitize all accessible parts using “safe water.”
  - E. WATER FOUNTAINS – Flush all water fountains for ten (10) minutes. Thoroughly wash and sanitize.
  - F. FILTERS – As a final step before resuming normal operations, replace all water filter elements. Clean and/or replace all faucet aerator screens.

If you have any questions, please call Environmental Health Staff at Southern 7 Health Department at (618) 634-2297ext. 973114.