

## **What is a “boil water notice” and why are these notices issued?**

A boil water notice **does not mean** that the water is contaminated. It is often the first **precautionary** step taken to protect consumers of our water from potential bacterial contamination either during scheduled work on the water system or while investigating certain types of unexpected events (such as a main break or leak).

However, boil water notices will also be issued immediately if any routine or non-routine test of our water identifies any bacterial contamination.

In the event of a boil water notice, affected members and water users should assume the water is unsafe to drink and take the appropriate precautions (explained in detail below). During a notice, all those affected are notified by phone, email, written, or direct communication and are advised to boil their water before consuming it or use bottled water.

A boil water notice remains in effect until a series of laboratory results show that the water is safe and free from bacterial contamination. These tests usually take 24-48 hours to complete by the lab. Bathing, washing clothes or dishes, and other activities where water is used externally do not pose a health risk during a boil water notice.

## **When is a boil water notice issued?**

O’Connor Water works with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Division of Drinking Water (DDW), to ensure safe drinking water is available at all times.

We adhere to stringent water quality testing and monitoring requirements to ensure that every drop of water delivered to you meets state and federal health and safety standards, by routinely testing the water quality.

In addition to monthly routine testing, the occurrences listed below trigger additional special sample collection to ensure the drinking water supply remains safe:

- Water main flushing
- Water system maintenance
- A water system completely loses water pressure or the pressure goes below 5 psi (pounds per square inch)
- Water main breaks
- Water samples indicate the presence of bacteria

The Company will issue a boil water notice if any routine or special sample result indicates the presence of water-borne biological contamination. Staff immediately notifies the Water Board’s Division of Drinking Water and begins an investigation and repeat sampling.

When a boil water notice is issued, it can only be lifted by the State’s Division of Drinking Water and only after the source of the contaminant has been mitigated and a series of two consecutive repeat sample sets show no presence of any contaminants.

The chances of water contamination are remote, and in most cases, issuing a boil water notice is a precautionary measure for the safety of our customers.

### **What should you do?**

Do not consume your water without boiling it first. Use boiled or bottled water for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, and food preparation until further notice.

To ensure elimination of all harmful bacteria and other microbes that might be present, a boil water notice will advise you to boil water used for drinking, cooking, and ice-making. Bring water to a vigorous, rolling boil and then boil for one minute (don't forget to cool the water before consuming it). According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), boiling is considered the most effective and the safest method of water disinfection.

Instead of boiling the water, you may purchase bottled water or obtain water from some other suitable source. You may also obtain it from our Company site at 211 Oak Court (call 650-321-2723 first). Please bring a clean container(s) no larger than 5 gallons (because of the weight).

### **What does O'Connor Water do when there is a Boil Water Notice?**

We are required to investigate the root cause of the boil water notice and confirm that it has been resolved by collecting repeat samples from the original site as well as upstream and downstream customer service connections of that point. Only after the following occurs can we then lift a boil water notice:

1. clarification of the cause and/or mitigation of the cause
2. lab results from two sets of consecutive samplings that are negative – showing no contamination
3. and approval from the State's Division of Drinking Water

### **How does O'Connor Water notify customers that a Boil Water Notice is issued?**

We will notify you by email, phone, notices hand delivered, or any combination of the above if your water doesn't meet EPA or State standards or if there is biological contamination.

To notify you during emergencies, we must have your current phone number and/or email address listed on your account to receive a call or message from the Company during an emergency. We use the same method to notify members and water users when the boil water notice is lifted.

All information on boil water notices is posted to our website during an event. To be sure you receive these messages please ensure your contact information is updated by calling at 650-321-2723, or emailing [occonnorwater@gmail.com](mailto:occonnorwater@gmail.com).