

Water Commission Messaging – Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Boil Water Advisory or Order?

Boil water advisories are issued either as a precaution or in response to a waterborne disease. For example, precautionary boil water advisory may be issued when local emergency repairs in the distribution system are needed.

The physical, microbiological, chemical, and radiological characteristics of portable water are analyzed according to Potable Water Regulation. If the results do not meet the Maximum Acceptable Concentration or Interim Acceptable Concentration specified in the Guidelines for Canada Drinking Water Quality, then Alberta Environment alerts Alberta Health Services (AHS).

Additionally, a boil water order is often issued in response to evidence indicating that drinking water is or may be responsible for an outbreak of illness. Boil water orders are issued when microbes like E. coli bacteria or Giardia parasites may be present in drinking water. Boil water advisories may also be issued in response to unacceptable levels in the cloudiness (turbidity) in the water at its originating source

What are we doing to resolve the Boil Water Order?

The Smoky River Regional Water Management Commission is in process of replacing our clarifier and is transitioning to a temporary portable clarifier in the meantime. We are currently in a turbidity contravention and the Boil Water Order is in place to ensure everyone's safety

The major concern when we breach turbidity limits is cryptosporidium (crypto). Crypto is a parasite that can become encased in cysts and are not deactivated by the chlorine when embodied in these cysts. The only lab in Alberta that tests for crypto is in Medicine Hat. We have coordinated to have 100 liters of water to be tested for crypto. If we can show that there is no crypto in the raw water, then we may have the Boil Water Advisory rescinded. We will not find out any results on the crypto tests until towards the end of next week.

More details around the clarifier replacement and ongoing updates related to the Boil Water Order will take place at least weekly or as soon as important information arises.

How do I safely use water during a Boil Water Order?

The water should NOT be used for drinking, making infant formula and juices, cooking, making ice, washing fruits, vegetables or brushing teeth. For these purposes, boiled or treated or bottled water should be used. The water should be brought to a rapid rolling boil for one minute. If there are

children in the home, place the pot on the back burner to avoid scalds. Boil only as much water in the pot as you can comfortably lift without spilling. Discard all ice made previously and disinfect the ice cube trays. Make ice using cooled water that was previously boiled.

Please view the following information from Alberta Health Services for other water safety instructions: [FAQ: How to use water safely during a boil water advisory | Alberta Health Services](#)

Will the water be shut off?

There are currently no plans to turn off water distribution to the communities served by the Water Commission; Town of Falher, Village of Girouxville, Village of Donnelly, Hamlet of Jean Cote, Hamlet of Guy, and customers of the Smoky River Water Coop. The Boil Water Order is still in effect and water should be boiled per the guidelines above.

When will truck fills re-open?

Truck fills on the Smoky River Regional Water Works system will be closed until the Boil Water Order has been rescinded.

References

[Alberta WaterPortal | Boil Water Advisories - Alberta WaterPortal](#)

[FAQ: How to use water safely during a boil water advisory | Alberta Health Services](#)