

# Boil Orders



**Boil Water  
Notice**

...AND COMMUNICATION

# What is a Boil Order?

- ▶ A Boil Order is a notice to potentially affected customers advising them to boil water prior to using for any drinking or culinary purposes.
- ▶ The Boil Order must be issued by Public Water Supply official(s).
- ▶ Boil Orders typically issued when microbial contamination is present –or- conditions are present for suspected microbial contamination.



# When a Boil Order should be considered

- ▶ When bacteriological sampling indicates the persistent presence of contamination.
  - ▶ If presence is indicated by routine coliform monitoring, repeat samples should be taken first, unless initial sampling indicates multiple positive samples and wide-spread contamination. Positive e-coli samples may require additional consideration.
  - ▶ Important to remember that boil order samples cannot be used as routine samples (Best reason not to wait until the end of the month to take routine samples) .

# When a Boil Order should be considered (cont'd)

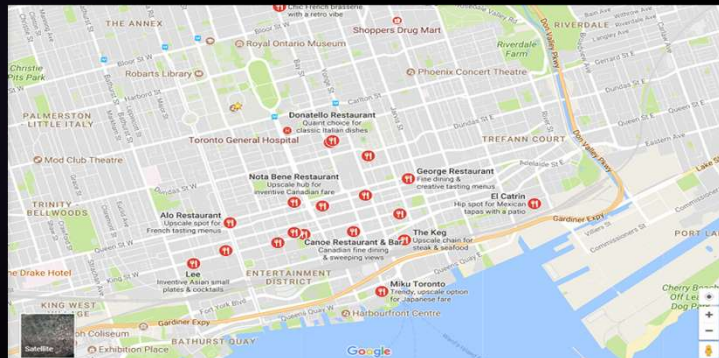
- ▶ Repair or maintenance of a finished water storage tank that cannot be isolated when intrusion of the tank is required.
- ▶ Any major disruption within the treatment scheme that causes a compromised disinfection practice or particulate removal.
- ▶ When turbidities exceed 1.0 NTU in the finished water.
- ▶ When system pressure has dropped below 20 psi for an extended period whether it is localized or system-wide. Exceptions may apply.

# When a Boil Order should be considered (cont'd)

- ▶ Surface water has entered wells and/or finished water storage tanks.
- ▶ The disinfectant contact time (CT) has been reduced due to changes in treatment and/or clearwell maintenance.
- ▶ Distribution water quality has changed significantly with indicators being turbid, discolor, odor, etc.
- ▶ Any other suspicion that bacterial contamination may be present.

# Types of Boil Orders

- ▶ System-Wide Order
- ▶ Localized Boil Order
  - ▶ Typically used for distribution maintenance and repair (water main break, localized pressure loss, water main replacement, etc.)



# Who Should Be Notified When a Boil Order is Issued?

- ▶ All affected customer must be advised of the boil order as soon as possible.
- ▶ Appropriate IEPA Regional Office (discussion regarding corrective actions and sampling requirements). After hours or weekends: contact Illinois Emergency Management Agency at 1-800-782-7860.
- ▶ County and/or local health department.

# How Should Customer Notification Be Distributed?

- ▶ Exhaustive efforts should be taken to notify all customers that are affected. Notification delivery methods may vary depending on the size of population affected and may require multiple delivery methods.
  - ▶ Local radio and television station
  - ▶ Hand delivery (door hangers)
  - ▶ Road Signs
  - ▶ Postings at conspicuous locations (post office, library, city hall, etc.)
  - ▶ Telephone (reverse 911)
  - ▶ Email/Texting

# What should be included in the Boil Order Notification?

- ▶ Effective Date and Time
- ▶ Affected Area
- ▶ Public Water Supply Contact information
- ▶ Actions to be taken by customer (5-minute rolling boil for consumption and culinary purposes)
- ▶ Notification procedure for Boil Order termination

# Boil Order Sampling

- ▶ Specific sampling instructions should be given by the appropriate IEPA Regional Office.
- ▶ Boil Order samples can be analyzed using any approved presence/absence method.
- ▶ One set of satisfactory samples: during instance of pressure drop and remediation has occurred.
- ▶ Two sets of satisfactory samples: when persistent contamination is evident as a result of flooding or previous confirmed sample results.

# Boil Order Considerations

- ▶ Remember – the boil order is issued by the system and should be used as a tool to protect public health
- ▶ While boil orders can be a pain, they are an effective way to protect your system from liabilities. Better safe than sorry.
- ▶ Stuff happens. Don't be afraid to issue a boil order when suspected contamination may be present and the boil order is warranted.

# Boil Order Considerations (cont'd)

- ▶ Boil orders are not to be issued in all circumstances where discoloration and/or turbid problems exist (i.e. nitrates, metals, etc).
- ▶ Be prepared for issuing boil orders and have the door hangars, signs, appropriate telephone numbers on hand.
- ▶ Make Boil Order procedures part of your Emergency Operations Planning
- ▶ DO NOT PUT A SUNSET OF THE BOIL ORDER WHEN ISSUING THE NOTIFICATION !!!

# Are Boil Orders a Regulatory Requirement?

- ▶ Heck YES:
- ▶ 35 IAC 604.135 outlines requirements for issuing boil orders and boil order notifications.



# Boil Order/Crisis Communication:

Some advice related to public and media interaction



# Types of Water Emergencies:

- ▶ Boil Orders
- ▶ Watermain Breaks
- ▶ Power Outages (weather related or accidental)
- ▶ Failure of water storage tanks or pumping equipment
- ▶ Treatment Plant failure
- ▶ Supply chain / chemical shortages
- ▶ Detection of water contaminants
- ▶ Security breaches
- ▶ Weather related disasters

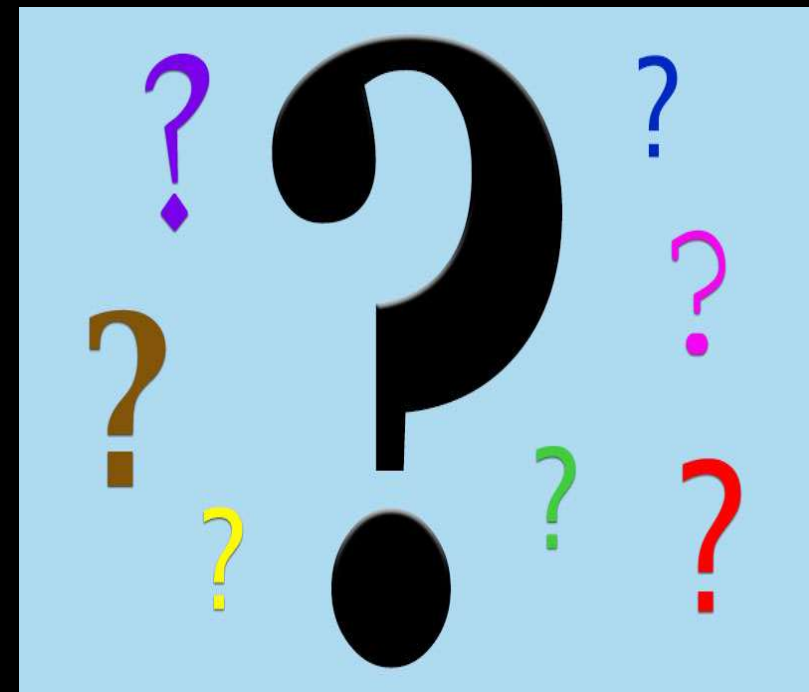


Other examples where your phone may be ringing a lot:



# Three Things People Want to Know During a Crisis:

- ▶ WHAT HAPPENED?
- ▶ WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME?
- ▶ WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT?



# Do's and Dont's of Communicating During Crisis: What to Do

- ▶ Take your time
- ▶ Think before you answer
- ▶ Say if you don't know
- ▶ Stick to facts
- ▶ Say if you can't answer and explain why
- ▶ Stay in your area of expertise or stick to talking points
- ▶ Assume everything is on record and is being recorded
- ▶ Maintain eye contact – protrude confidence
- ▶ Be firm, fair and 100% honest
- ▶ **BE PROFESSIONAL !!!!!**



| For a story about pumping up your confidence

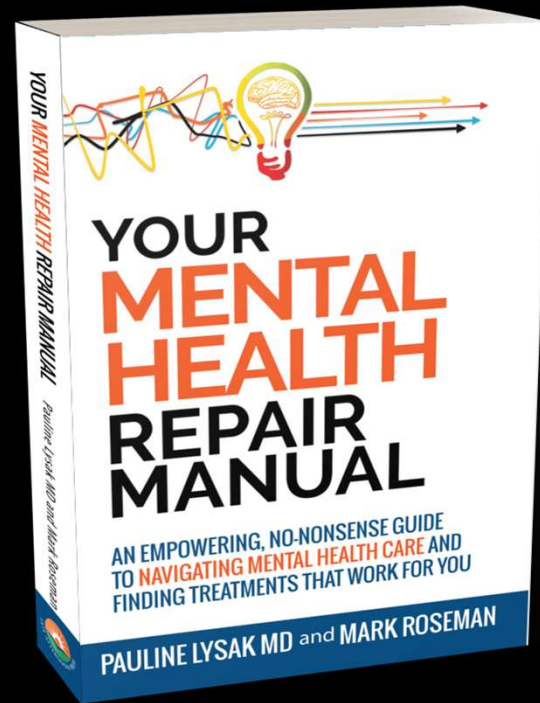
# Do's and Dont's of Communicating During Crisis: **What not to do:**

- ▶ Lie, guess, or speculate
- ▶ Get upset or angry
- ▶ Use acronyms or jargon
- ▶ Talk about protected information
- ▶ Talk about information outside your expertise
- ▶ Repeat negative words from questions
- ▶ Play favorites with customers or reporters - be consistent with your message
- ▶ Do not say "no comment"
- ▶ Do not introduce new issues or subjects

# Situations to Avoid with Good Communication



# Additional Resources:





United States Environmental Protection Agency

[Environmental Topics](#) | [Laws & Regulations](#) | [Report a Violation](#) | [About EPA](#)

Related Topics: [Community-Based Water Resilience](#) | [Emergency Response for Drinking Water and Wastewater Utilities](#) | [CONTACT US](#)

## Water Utility Communication During Emergency Response

When disaster strikes, communicating the issues and their consequences to your customers and response partners is crucial. Because communities depend on well-functioning water systems, this is especially true for water and wastewater utilities.

### Explore these tools to communicate the right messages in an emergency

- [Effective Risk and Crisis Communication During Water Security Emergencies: Report Of EPA Sponsored Message Mapping Workshops](#)
- [Need to Know: Anticipating the Public's Questions During a Water Emergency](#)
- [Drinking Water Advisory Communication Toolbox](#)
- [Developing Risk Communication Plans for Drinking Water Contamination Incidents](#)



#### Learn More

- [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) IS-29 Public Information Officer Awareness](#)



## Developing Risk Communication Plans for Drinking Water Contamination Incidents

Office of Water (4608-T) EPA 817-F-13-003 April 2013



## Effective Risk and Crisis Communication during Water Security Emergencies

SUMMARY REPORT OF EPA SPONSORED MESSAGE MAPPING WORKSHOPS



EPA/600/R-12/020

## NEED TO KNOW: Anticipating the Public's Questions during a Water Emergency



Office of Research and Development  
National Homeland Security Research Center

Questions or Comments?

