

Frequently Asked Questions: Operating a Food Establishment During a Boil Water Order

Q. *My establishment was issued a Boil Water Order. What should I do?*

A. ALL establishments that sell food or drink that are issued a Boil Water Order will need to close while the Order is in place unless one of the following applies:

- The establishment sells only pre-packaged foods (candy bars) and drinks (e.g., canned soda)
- The establishment has a written plan that has been reviewed and approved by the Chicago Department of Public Health

Q. *What needs to be in the written plan?*

A. The plan must have steps in place that make modifications to the following procedures:

- Preparing and serving food
- Providing drinking water
- Providing ice
- Providing other beverages (coffee, soft drinks)
- Washing hands
- Washing dishes
- Cleaning

Q. *How do I develop a written plan?*

A. Establishments can use whatever format they wish to develop their written plans so long as the plan addresses the issues listed above. Alternatively, establishments can use the attached template.

Q. *How do I get assistance in developing a written plan? How do I get my written plan approved?*

A. For assistance in developing a written plan or to get your written plan approved, contact the CDPH Food Protection Program at (312) 746-8115. CDPH does not provide these services after-hours or on weekends or holidays.

Q. *What else do I need to do to stay open while the Order is in place?*

A. In addition to having a written plan that has been reviewed and approved by the CDPH, the establishment must have the necessary equipment and supplies to implement the plan. If you find that you are unable effectively implement the plan, you are required to voluntarily close.

Q. *What do I need to do once the Boil Water Order has been lifted?*

A. Whether you closed voluntarily or remained opened, once the Boil Water Order is lifted, you can resume normal operations only after all of the following steps are completed:

- Turn on all cold water faucets for 5 minutes under maximum flow
- Turn on all drinking water fountains for 5 minutes under maximum flow
- Run the ice machine to create a new batch of ice then discard. Repeat two more times. Clean the machine per the manufacturer's instructions, and then make a new batch of ice for use.
- Drain and refill all hot water tanks

Q. *Will CDPH conduct an inspection? When?*

A. The Department of Water Management will notify CDPH when a Boil Water Order has been issued. In response, CDPH will inspect all affected establishments to ensure that they voluntarily closed. If an establishment is found to be open and is selling something other than pre-packaged food or drink or does not have a written and approved plan in place to remain open, CDPH will close the establishment. Additionally, if an establishment has a written and approved plan to remain open, but upon inspection, CDPH finds an establishment cannot effectively implement the plan, CDPH may close the establishment.

The Department of Water Management will also notify CDPH when a Boil Water Order has been lifted. In response, CDPH may inspect all affected establishments to ensure that they completed all necessary steps to resume operations. Alternatively, CDPH may call the establishment to verify this.