

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 18, 2021

WQA offers tips for Texas Boil Water Notices

Homeowners advised to take water treatment systems offline during period

LISLE, Ill. – Boil water advisories are in effect in cities across Texas as the state works to cope with ongoing weather, energy and water crises. The Water Quality Association (WQA) offers suggestions and [information for consumers](#) in the wake of this appropriate response to a temporary health emergency brought on by the icy winter weather.

An estimated 7 million people in Texas, including residents of large cities such as Houston, Fort Worth and Arlington, have been put on notice that they need to boil their water before drinking after arctic cold and ice storms hit the state earlier this week, straining the entire state's power grid and leaving millions without heat or electricity for days.

WQA and the Water Quality Research Foundation (WQRF) recommend residents follow the boil water alert until bacteriological samples demonstrate the water is safe or until corrective actions have been completed. Bathing or showering with the water is safe as long as you are careful not to swallow any – be sure to keep an eye on young children.

In addition, residents or businesses who have drinking water treatment systems such as reverse osmosis or water softeners should take the system offline to disinfect and protect the system during the emergency period. The water treatment system should be disinfected separately following manufacturer's instructions. Wait until the public water system has lifted the boil water alert and has said the water is safe to drink before reconnecting the water treatment system.

What is a Boil Water Alert?

A boil water alert is issued by a public water system when there is a known or suspected microbial contaminant in the drinking water distribution system. A boil water alert may be issued in response to a known event or as a precautionary measure to protect the public in case microbial contaminants are present. The microbes could be viral, bacterial, or protozoan, any of which can cause severe health issues. The alert will instruct residents to boil all water used for drinking, cooking, food preparation, brushing teeth, and making ice. The most sensitive populations to microbial contaminants include children, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems.

How does a Boil Water Alert differ from a Do Not Drink or Do Not Use notice?

A Do Not Drink or Do Not Use notice may indicate chemical contamination and advises consumers to find alternative drinking water sources because boiling will not make the water safe for these specific contaminants. This type of notice advises residents to avoid contact with the water.

For more information on this boil water alert notice, consult [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance](#) and your local news sources. Knowing the specific circumstances of the boil water alert will help you determine your next actions.

For more information or help on disinfection contact a water treatment provider in your area and certified water treatment professionals who have completed WQA's professional certification program. Visit [Better Water Today](#) or [WQA's website](#) for a searchable database.

WQA is a not-for-profit [trade association](#) representing the residential, commercial, and industrial water treatment industry. WQA's [education and professional certification programs](#) have been providing industry-standardized training and credentialing since 1977. The [WQA Gold Seal certification program](#) has been certifying products that contribute to the safe consumption of water since 1959. The WQA Gold Seal program is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the Standards Council of Canada (SCC). WQA publishes a consumer-friendly website, [BetterWaterToday.org](#).