

# Boil Water Notices

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Boil water notices (BWNs) are public notifications issued as a precautionary measure to protect public health. During a BWN, water used for drinking and cooking should be boiled for at least two minutes prior to consumption.

According to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), which is the

regulatory organization for the state of Texas, an average of approximately 150 BWNs are issued per month in Texas. The general causes for BWNs are pressure drops in pipes, low disinfectant residuals, and turbidity. Presence of *E. coli*—a type of bacteria which may indicate fecal contamination—in water samples has also caused BWNs in some cases.

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# What is a Boil Water Notice (BWN)?

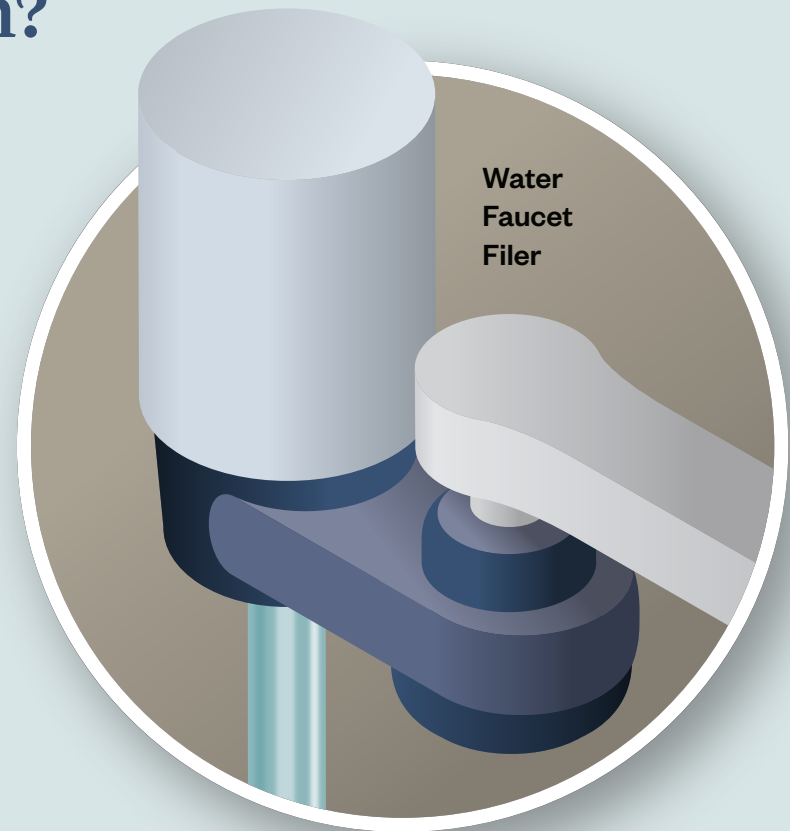
A BWN is a public notification from the water utility to communicate that water should not be consumed by the public without first being boiled.

A BWN may be prompted by either a known or suspected risk in the system. It is usually *a precautionary measure to protect public health when there is a potential problem with the water distribution system or water quality.*

## Can home-based water treatment units/ filters provide a sufficient degree of protection?

During a BWN, it is not recommended to rely on home-based water treatment units. These systems may not be capable of removing certain disease-causing bacteria.

Once the BWN has been lifted, we recommend replacing water filters.



# What is the difference between a BWN and water ban?

*Understanding Preventative Actions, Public Boil Water Notices, and Water Bans*

Preventative Actions to Sustain  
or Improve Water Quality

**Hydrant  
Flushing**

**Free Chlorine  
Disinfectant  
Conversion**

Maintains  
“fresh” water  
in pipes

Reduces  
organisms that  
cause nitrification



**No restriction on water usage**

Precautionary Action  
to Protect Public Safety

**Boil Water  
Notice**

Issued due to known  
or potential decline  
in water quality



**Boil prior to  
consumption, all other  
uses allowed**

Suspected or Unknown  
Risk to Public

**Water  
Ban**

Issued due to  
known or potential  
contamination



**Some or all water uses  
may be restricted**



# What steps should you take when a BWN is issued?

In the event of a BWN, always boil water before drinking or cooking with the water. Water should be brought to a rolling boil for at least two minutes and cooled before consuming. Another option is switching temporarily to bottled water for consumption until the BWN is lifted.

During a BWN, tap water is considered safe for bathing and doing laundry, unless otherwise stated in the BWN. While doing dishes, hot soapy water should be used and the dishes should be rinsed in boiled water.

## How often have BWNs been issued by major water utilities in Texas?

According to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), there are approximately 150 BWNs issued per month by the 7,000 plus water utilities in the state of Texas. These BWNs were issued due to:

- Low water pressures
- Low disinfectant levels in the distribution system
- Turbidity–increased suspended particles causing water color to change (often becoming murky or cloudy).
- Detection of *E. coli*–a type of bacteria that may indicate fecal contamination.



# What caused BWNs in Corpus Christi in 2015- 2016?

In 2015-2016, the City of Corpus Christi issued two city-wide BWNs and one localized BWN in compliance with guidelines from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). The reasons behind these BWNs were two instances of low disinfectant levels in the distribution system according to TCEQ

guidelines and one case of detection of *E.coli*. Prior to this, there have been only two BWNs issued in the City since 2007.

The City of Corpus Christi also issued a water ban on December 14, 2016 as a result of potential chemical contamination from a 3rd-party industrial source.

**STATUS: ADVISORY LIFTED**

**WATER: SAFE TO DRINK**



**BOIL WATER  
ADVISORY**

# History of BWNs in Corpus Christi

**1980s**

Chloramination Begins

1980

1990

2000

**2007**

BWN due to E.coli presence

2010

**2015/2016**

BWNs due to low disinfectant level or E.coli presence

2020

**2007**

BWN due to low disinfectant level

**2015**

TCEQ adopts new regulation requiring systems to develop a Nitrification Action Plan



## What to do after a BWN is lifted?

After the City lifts a BWN, it is important to:

- Flush plumbing systems in homes and businesses by running all cold water faucets for at least one minute
- Clean automatic ice makers by making and discarding three batches of ice
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle
- Replace water filters



## Is our water safe for consumption?

Yes. The City of Corpus Christi Staff takes a number of proactive steps and performs regular monitoring, testing, maintenance, and upgrades to the water system. The City also invests in Improvement Programs to plan and provide for the needs of Corpus Christi's growing population.

In spite of such proactive measures, occasional, often unavoidable, water quality challenges may occur because of system age, wet weather events, changing regulatory requirements, or contamination from third parties. The priority of the Corpus Christi Staff is to safeguard human health. While water

challenges have occurred in Corpus Christi, none have resulted in an outbreak of waterborne diseases. In the event of a potential risk, our city's staff takes immediate action to contain and resolve the risk, while notifying the public to take appropriate precautions.

Due to the continued efforts of our city staff, the City of Corpus Christi's drinking water is in compliance with Federal and State regulatory requirements for safe drinking water according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) standards.