

What is a System Pressure Advisory?

A System Pressure Advisory (SPA) is a public statement advising customers to boil tap water before consuming it. Advisories are issued when an event has occurred allowing the possibility for the water distribution system to become contaminated. *An advisory does not mean that the water is contaminated, but rather that it could be contaminated;* because the water quality is unknown, customers should assume the water is unsafe to drink and take the appropriate precautions until water samples can be tested. A System Pressure Advisory is different from a Boil Water Notice, which is issued when contamination is *confirmed* in the water system. During a notice, all customers must boil their water before consuming it or use bottled water.

What actions do I need to take?

If a system pressure advisory is issued, it is **recommended** all water used for human consumption be boiled but it is not mandatory. Recommendations include bringing all water to a rolling boil, let it boil for one minute, and cool before using; or use bottled water. It is recommended to use boiled or bottled water for drinking, making ice, washing dishes, brushing teeth and food preparation until you are notified that the advisory has been lifted.

The following steps are also recommended:

- Throw away uncooked food or beverages or ice cubes if made with tap water during the day of the advisory
- Keep boiled water in the refrigerator for drinking
- Do not swallow water while you are showering or bathing
- Provide pets with boiled water after cooling
- Do not use home filtering devices in place of boiling or using bottled water; Most home water filters will not provide adequate protection from microorganisms
- Use only boiled water to treat minor injuries; When showering or bathing, avoid allowing the water to come in contact with an open wound
- Do not wash salad items with tap water during the period; Use bottled water or freshly boiled and cooled tap water

How long does a system pressure advisory last until it can be lifted?

A System Pressure Advisory or Notice will remain in effect until test samples show the water is safe to drink. Testing for bacteria requires 18 to 24 hours to complete, depending on the type of test used. A notification will be sent out to either rescind the System Pressure Advisory if water samples test negative for bacteria or if samples test positive for bacteria, an official Boil Water Advisory will be issued.

Since an advisory is a precautionary measure, will I get sick if I drink the water? What if I drank some of the water before I found out about the advisory?

Until test results show the water is safe to drink, you should not drink the water without boiling it first. During an advisory, chances are if you are in good health, you will not get sick from drinking the water; however, young children, some of the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems should not drink the water until it is deemed safe to drink. Symptoms of illness caused by

bacteria in the water may include diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. Please note that these symptoms are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice.

What should I do once the advisory is lifted?

Customers under a system pressure advisory can resume normal water usage when the notice is lifted without taking additional measures. If you experience cloudy or discolored water, you should run your faucets for a few minutes until the water runs clear.

Can I use the water for showering and bathing?

Yes. Just be careful not to drink the water while you shower or bathe or to allow the water to get into any open wounds.

Can I use the water for laundry?

Yes, it is OK to do laundry.

Can I use the water for washing dishes?

It is recommended affected customers not use the dishwasher because the water temperature in most dishwashers does not reach the boiling point. Dishes should be hand-washed with water that has been boiled first. Or, you can use hot, soapy water and add one tablespoon of bleach per gallon as a precaution, and rinse dishes in cooled water that has been boiled first.

Do I still need to boil my water if I have a filter system on my faucet or refrigerator?

Most point-of-use filters are designed to improve the aesthetics of water (improve taste and odor), and not to remove harmful bacteria. You can learn about the capability of your filter by contacting the manufacturer. If in doubt, you should boil your water or use bottled water even if you have a filtering system

How long is boiled water safe to drink?

Once the water has been boiled, you can cover it and put it in the refrigerator for later use. As long as the water is protected from contamination, it will stay safe to drink.

Should I flush my house pipes?

Craven County will notify you if it is necessary to flush household pipes and will provide instructions to take prior to using the water in the event of a mandatory boil water advisory . Flushing simply means letting the water run to ensure that no contaminated water remains in your pipes. If customers are advised to flush household plumbing, the guidelines will likely include:

- Run all cold water faucets in your home for at least five minutes at one time with the highest water flow possible to prevent splashing or flooding of the drains
- To flush automatic ice makers, make three batches of ice and discard
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines specified in the owner's manual

- Run drinking water fountains and water coolers with direct water connections for at least five minutes at the highest flow rate possible
- Change refrigerator filters