



## FLORIDA KEYS AQUEDUCT AUTHORITY

### What Does A Precautionary Boil Water Notice (PBWN) Mean For Me?

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If, during a hurricane, or unforeseen disruption like a water main break, our water system loses power and water pressure, we may issue a precautionary boil water notice (PBWN) to our customers as required by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Water pressure keeps unhealthy pollutants from entering the underground pipes that bring drinking water to your house or business. When the pressure is lost, contaminants can seep into the pipes. This might allow pathogens (disease-causing germs) into the water that can cause illness if one drinks it or prepares food or beverages with it. So, as a precaution, it is important to disinfect tap water to kill any bacteria or viruses that may have entered the water.

A PBWN is issued if FKAA has no reason to believe the water is contaminated. A mandatory boil water order will be issued if the FKAA is aware that contamination has occurred or there is a high probability of contamination. Under a PBWN, water used for consumption can be disinfected by any one of the following methods:

- Bringing the water to a rolling boil and holding it there for one (1) minute
- Using a disinfecting chemical. If you cannot boil water, you should put 8 drops of common household bleach (about 1/8<sup>th</sup> teaspoon) into 1 gallon of tap water, then shake it and allow it to stand for 30 minutes before drinking. If the water is cloudy, use 16 drops (about 1/4 teaspoon) of bleach instead of 8, shake it, and let it stand for 30 minutes. There should be a slight chlorine odor. Use common household bleach that has 5% to 6% active ingredients. Use food grade containers. Don't use bleach that has perfume scents added.
- Using water purification tablets or iodine that many sports and camping stores sell

You can also buy commercial bottled water for consumption and food preparation. Consumption includes brushing teeth, washing fruits and vegetables, and homemade ice. Tap water may be used for showering, baths, shaving and washing, so long as care is taken not to swallow or allow water in eyes or nose or mouth. Children and disabled individuals should have their bath supervised to ensure water is not ingested. The time spent bathing should be minimized. Though the risk of illness is minimal, individuals who have recent surgical wounds, are immunosuppressed, or have a chronic illness may want to consider using bottled or boiled water for cleansing until the notice is lifted.

Businesses and non-residential sites should take steps such as posting notices at, or disabling water fountains and ice machines during the PBWN. If you provide water to visitors or employees, use a commercially produced bottled water for drinking or beverage preparation (coffee). Food service operations have additional requirements from their regulatory agency.

After the water system is repaired, and the pressure is restored in the pipes to your home or business, the PBWN will remain in effect for one to several days while bacteria tests are conducted to assure the safety of the water. The notice will be lifted (rescinded) only after tests prove the water is safe to drink. It may be lifted in sections of the city/county as those areas' pipes are cleared and the water deemed safe to drink. The media will be provided information updates and you should listen for this important information on the radio or television.

The employees of the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority take great care in ensuring that your water is safe to drink, and we appreciate your cooperation with the precautionary boil water notice to protect public health when a difficult time arises. Please call us at (305)296-2454, (305)289-6161, or (305)853-1999 if you have questions or concerns. You may also call the Department of Health office at (305)289-2724 for additional assistance.