

Updated:5/24/2014

BOIL WATER NOTICE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About the Event:

What's going on?

On May 24, 2014 the Portland Water Bureau lifted the boil water notice issued on May 23, 2014.

On May 23, 2014 a boil water notice was issued for all customers of the Portland Water Bureau, Burlington, City of Gresham (North of I-84), Lake Grove, Lorna Water, Palatine Hill, Rockwood, Tigard Water Service Area (including Durham, King City and Bull Mountain), Valley View, and West Slope Water Districts.

The boil water notice is no longer in effect.

What happened?

Routine samples from the outlet of Reservoir 1 at Mount Tabor on May 20, at SE 2nd and Salmon on May 21, and the outlet of Reservoir 5 at Mount Tabor on May 22 were positive for total coliform and *E. coli*. Follow-up samples collected from Reservoir 1 and SE 2nd Ave at Salmon St. were negative for total coliform and *E. coli*. On May 23, in consultation with health officials, this was considered a public health risk and as a result of the detections a boil water notice was issued. Follow-up samples collected from the outlet of Reservoir 5 and throughout the affected area on May 23, 2014 were all negative for total coliform and *E. coli*, indicating that the water is safe to drink.

The bacteria found were *E.coli*. The presence of these bacteria in drinking water indicates fecal contamination. Water that tests positive for these bacteria may contain potentially pathogenic organisms and would be risky to drink without first boiling for one minute.

What is the Portland Water Bureau Doing?

The Portland Water Bureau took Reservoirs 1 and 5 on Mount Tabor out of service, and has flushed the system near SE 2nd Ave and Salmon St. Reservoir 1 and 5 will be drained and cleaned. Staff are investigating the affected area for any possible sources of contamination and conducting sampling throughout the affected area.

The results are negative for *E. coli* 0157:H7; however, the presence of *E. coli* is an indication of fecal contamination that may contain other potentially pathogenic organisms that are not easy to test for.

Health

I am feeling ill, what should I do?

Symptoms are not only caused by organisms in drinking water. People experiencing any symptoms that persist may want to seek medical advice from their doctor. People who feel their symptoms are a result of consuming drinking water should contact the Multnomah County Health Department Communicable Disease Nurse at 503-988-3406.

After the Boil Water Incident:

What should customers do?

Customers should flush all taps for 2 minutes or until the water runs cold before consuming for the first time. This will flush any potentially contaminated water from the plumbing.

What should I do with ice, food or beverages made during the boil water notice?

All ice and beverages made with non boiled water on or after May 20, 2014 should be discarded. Any food made with water on or after May 20, 2014 that is not thoroughly cooked above 165 degrees should also be discarded. Food that is cooked (boiled, grilled or baked) at a temperature above 165 degrees is safe to consume.

Should I replace my home water filter after the event?

This incident should not have affected your water filter.

Filters should be changed according to the regular schedule recommended by the manufacturer. It is a general health precaution to regularly change filters as old filters can diminish water quality.

Do I need to flush or adjust the temperature of my hot water heater?

A bath or shower would be sufficient to flush any potential bacteria from the hot water heater. To reduce the risk of lead and copper exposure through household plumbing and fixtures, customers should never cook with or drink from the hot water tap.

Other:

Why didn't I receive a call or text to advise me of this event?

The City of Portland sent out a public alert to residents who have a publicly listed landline or who have registered to receive emergency alerts. To register, please visit www.publicalerts.org

Will I receive a credit on my water bill because of this event?

No

Is it possible that the contamination has been intentionally caused?

Both reservoirs are being drained and an investigation is underway. Results will not be available for several days.

Isn't my water treated after it leaves the reservoir? Why not?

No. The water in the reservoirs was treated with chlorine at the Bull Run Headworks, and further treated with ammonia to form chloramines at the Lusted Hill Treatment facility east of Gresham. The in-town reservoirs are storage facilities.

How often do you sample?

The water leaving Reservoirs 1 and 5 is sampled 4 days per week for bacteria. The Portland Water Bureau also tests approximately 240 samples a month from locations around the city four days per week.