

Do Not Drink/Use Notice

A “Do Not Drink” or “Do Not Use Notice” is issued when there is chemical or heavy metal contamination in the water supply as determined by the Public Water Supply Section. Because of this contamination, **water must not be used or consumed.**

Boiling water is not permitted under a “Do Not Drink” or “Do Not Use” order. When there are chemical or heavy metal contaminants in the water, they can be concentrated in the water by boiling. An alternate water source, like bottled water, should be obtained for use. The type of notice issued will determine whether the water can be used for other things, like laundry and bathing, or whether it should not be used for any purpose. Refer to the specific order issued by the water authority or N.C. Department of Environmental Quality, Public Water Supply Section, for instructions on how the water may be used, if at all.

General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

Considerations During a “Do Not Drink/Use Notice” (items to be considered on an Emergency Operations Plan)



Carefully wash hands with soap and rinse with bottled water. Set up temporary handwash stations with bottled water.



Block all sinks so they are inaccessible for use or turn off water coming into the sinks. Place signs reminding employees not to use tap water.



Mechanical dishwashers cannot be used during a do not drink or do not use notice. Single service eating and drinking utensils should be used.



Cooking utensils or other items that are needed for food preparation and storage must be cleaned and sanitized with bottled water.



Do not use tap water for making sanitizer. Use pre-mixed sanitizer if available. If pre-mixed sanitizer cannot be obtained, bottled water or another water source must be used. Sanitizer dispensers cannot be used during a do not drink or do not use notice.



Ice made with tap water should NOT be used, buy from a safe source. Bottled water is required for all beverages made by mixing with water such as tea, coffee, lemonade, etc.



Water filters will not remove chemical and metal contaminants. An alternate water source is still required even when water filters are in place.

Restaurants, meat markets, and other permitted facilities may not operate during a “Do Not Drink/Use Notice.” Permitted facilities must close until a safe water supply is verified by the water authority unless an approved Emergency Operations Plan, as stated in NC Food Code 8-404.11, is in place.

Recovery, once the “Do Not Drink/Use Notice,” has been lifted:

- Run water for a few minutes once the notice is lifted to flush the lines.
- Run your dishwasher through a cycle prior to using.
- Replace all filters you may have according to manufacturer’s recommendations.
- Flush lines to all water using fixtures, such as beverage dispensers, coffee makers, ice machines, water fountains, etc.
- Dispose of any ice and beverages made during the boil water notice using tap water.
- Dispose of any food made with or produce washed with contaminated tap water.

