
Issuance and Removal of Do Not Drink Water Orders

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 111, Section 160, "the department may ... make rules and regulations and issue such orders as in its opinion may be necessary to prevent the pollution and to secure the sanitary protection of all such waters used as sources of water supply and to ensure the delivery of a fit and pure water supply to all consumers." The MassDEP policy 87-06, *Boil Water Orders, Do Not Drink Order, Do Not Use Orders* located at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/regulations/policies-and-guidance-documents.html>, describes the procedures used when, in the judgment of the MassDEP, a Do Not Drink Water order may be issued to respond to a threat to the public from the presence chemical, biological or radiological contamination when there is no identified risk due to inhalation, skin irritation or flammability. Do Not Drink Water orders may also be issued when bacteria contamination when boiling or disinfection is not available or practical.

If you have questions on this information or need to issue a DO NOT DRINK WATER order please contact [your regional MassDEP office](#):

During Business Hours		After Business Hours/Weekends/Holidays
Region	Phone Number	MassDEP 24 hour emergency number
Western	413-784-1100	1-888-304-1133
Central	508-792-7650	
Northeast	978-694-3200	
Southeast	508-946-2700	
Boston	617-292-5770	

The MassDEP Drinking Water Program uses the following minimum procedures when deciding to issue a DO NOT DRINK WATER Order:

I. Deficiencies Requiring Do Not Drink Water Order

Do Not Drink orders are necessary when the Drinking Water Program (DWP) is concerned about contamination in a water supply where that supply meets one or more of the following criteria and the contaminant(s) of concern is not potentially hazardous through other exposure routes and characteristics like inhalation and flammability:

- a) the supply is contaminated with a known chemical or radiological contaminant but the concentration is unknown or
- b) the supply is grossly contaminated with bacteria but boiling or disinfection is not available or practical or is potentially hazardous due to other threats.

Examples of situations which may present a threat to public health and require the issuance of a Do Not Drink order include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Chemical MCL, Health Advisory Violation, or Other Known Chemical Hazard (e.g., water treatment chemical overfeed)

Note: some corrective actions used to help mitigate a water treatment chemical overfeed, such as extensive flushing of the distribution system, may create other potential problems (e.g., no or low system pressure in a significant portion of the distribution system, reverse flows with the potential for increase in HPC/bacteria) that would call for issuing a Do Not Use or Do Not Drink Order to a Boil Water Order rather than lifting the Do Not Use or Do Not Drink Order directly.
2. Radiological MCL, or Health Advisory Violation

II. Providing Public Notification

When a Public Water System is issued a Do Not Drink Water order the system shall immediately notify consumers or at least within 24 hours of its issuance. Notification shall be made with the attached DO NOT DRINK WATER notice or other notices generated by the MassDEP. Any modifications to the notice must be approved by the DWP prior to distribution. Notification may be made through radio, television or a daily newspaper for community systems where hand delivery is impractical. In some instances the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may require additional public notification.

III. Removing a Do Not Drink Water Order

1. Correction of Deficiency

A Do Not Drink Water order can be removed from a public water system when MassDEP determines that the deficiency has been corrected and satisfactory sampling and analysis is completed.

Do Not Drink Water Order Deficiency Correction	
Deficiency	Minimum Corrective Action
Potential or actual chemical or radiological contamination.	Satisfactory analytical testing results.
System without water or negative pressure.	Reestablish service and maintain positive pressure.
Equipment failure	Repair or replacement of equipment
Acute bacterial violation.	Establish or reestablish disinfection and maintain residuals.

2. Do Not Drink Water Order Samples

The required number, type and location of samples taken to lift a "Do Not Drink Water Order" shall be determined by the MassDEP. These samples at a minimum should be:

- Representative of the distribution system affected by the Do Not Drink Water Order
- Be below all standards set by MassDEP in order to remove the Do Not Drink Water Order and
- Represent the water served to all consumers.