

**Long Term Care - Introduction to Facility  
Emergency Plans**

**Boil Water  
Order/Water Loss**

# What is a “**Water Loss/Boil Water Order**”

- **A boil water order** is called when the facility’s water supply (well or municipal supply) or system (pipes, pumps etc.) are contaminated and the water becomes unsafe to ingest. In this case water still flows from the taps, toilets etc., but cannot be used as normal.
- **A water loss** situation is one where facility is not able to access water from its supply. This can be due to many factors, for example a cut water main, an internal system failure, planned or intentional shut down, etc. In a situation like this there is water being pumped through the taps, into the toilets, etc.

# What to do During a **Boil Water Order**

## **During a Boil Water Order:**

- Ensure Incident Commander, nutrition services staff and maintenance staff are made aware of a boil water order.
- Staff will follow directions provided by their Department Leaders and the Incident Commander.
- Follow water conservation instructions when they are issued
- Only bottled water will be used for tooth brushing, mouth rinsing and drinking.
- Facility will have water supplies on hand or access them immediately.
- Before any tap water is used as normal, water must be tested by Environmental Health and all water supplies must be flushed for two (2) minutes (after plan deactivation).
- **Do not begin any recovery tasks until the plan is deactivated by the Incident Commander.**

# What to do During a **Boil Water Order**

## **Hand Washing – for resident caregivers, residents, visitors and all staff:**

- If hands are soiled wash hands with soap and tap water and follow with alcohol – based hand sanitizer.
- If hands are not soiled use the alcohol hand sanitizer alone.

## **Do Not Use**

- Do not use ice machines, coffee machines, electric kettles or hot water dispensers.
- Destroy all ice made by ice machines or any means when a boil water order is issued.
- Do not make ice from tap water during the water boil order.

# What to do During a **Total Water Loss**

## **If the water system fails at your facility:**

- Ensure Incident Commander, nutrition services staff and maintenance staff are made aware of water loss situation.
- Staff will follow directions provided by their Department Leaders and the Incident Commander.
- Follow water conservation instructions when they are issued.
- Only bottled water will be used for tooth brushing, mouth rinsing and drinking.
- Facility will have water supplies on hand or access them immediately.

# What to do During a **Total Water Loss**

- Staff may be asked to bring their own lunches to the Home.
- Porta Potties and Hand Washing Stations will be made available if necessary.
- Residents requiring toilets will use commodes using garbage bags with absorbent, which will be set up in the main household bathroom and tub room or elsewhere as required.
- **Do not** use bottled water to flush toilets.
- **Hand Washing – for resident caregivers, patients, visitors and all staff:**
  - ▶ Hand washing will be done with hand sanitizer when possible
  - ▶ If hands are soiled use bottled water and soap

# Boils Water Order/Water Loss– Team Leaders

## **Department/Neighbourhood Leads will –**

- Oversee the implementation of plans in their departments.
- Attend or send a representative to all staff meetings regarding water loss or boil water orders and be prepared to provide updates on department actions, needs and challenges.
- Ensure that department team huddles are scheduled on a regular basis
- Track usage of supplies and request additional supplies as necessary.
- Inform the Incident Commander of any additional required resources (e.g. staff, supplies, equipment).

# Know Your Facility

- You should be familiar with following items in your facility, including but not necessarily limited to:
  - ▶ What equipment requires water and needs to be shut down and/or have signage placed on it.
  - ▶ What needs to be disposed of in the event of a boil water order or total water loss.
  - ▶ Location of emergency water supplies.
  - ▶ Site All Hazards/Emergency Plan.



# Where to go to learn more!

- Site All Hazards/Emergency Plan
- Supervisor
- [www.healthpei.ca/src/ltc](http://www.healthpei.ca/src/ltc)
- Contact Emergency Health and Planning Services – [spdaley@gov.pe.ca](mailto:spdaley@gov.pe.ca)

**Thank you!**

**Health PEI**

One Island Health System