

Boil Water Advisory Information

The City of Marshall makes every effort to provide our customers with a continuous and safe supply of water. Drinking water is delivered to our users throughout a network of water mains that are continually pressurized from water towers and our water plant. This network of pipes is constructed of approved piping materials designed to last several decades. However, pipelines deteriorate, are affected by ground shifting, and occasionally have to be maintained, repaired, or replaced. When it is necessary to remove a fire hydrant, control valve, or a section of pipe, the main is shutdown and “depressurized” or “dewatered”. These repairs are often done as an emergency and proper notification cannot be done in advance.

When a water main has to be dewatered or its pressure is dropped to a very low level to allow for this type of work to be done, it will sometimes be necessary to issue a boil water advisory. This is a precautionary measure to protect the public health as the quality of the water in the affected area can not be fully determined. The City of Marshall utility staff and contractors working on our system are diligent in making repairs and improvements in a safe manner. Care is taken in these actions and additional measures are followed to disinfect and flush the water system where it has been worked on. It is very likely that these measures are adequate to assure that the water is safe to drink again. Unfortunately, there is still the possibility that an unknown contaminant or pollutant could have entered the system from inappropriate plumbing connections or other sources near the water main that has been shutdown. Such contaminants or pollutants may not have been completely removed by flushing and disinfection of the piping. The final step in this process is to sample and test the water. The testing process takes a prescribed period of time to conduct and determine results. Water quality cannot be confidently stated until the results of testing have been completed.

Historically, water providers throughout the State of Michigan have put depressurized water mains back into service after disinfection and or flushing was completed. This practice does not take the steps necessary to determine that the water in the system fully meets the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. As your water provider, it would be improper for us to put water mains back into service without properly notifying you, our customer, of these possibilities. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) suggests that people in the area of a water main that has been depressurized, boil their water before drinking it. Boiling of water for consumption in these areas should be done until the sampling and testing results insure that the water in the area again meets the Safe Drinking Water Act requirements.

The City of Marshall wants our customers to have a high level of confidence in knowing that the water that we provide is safe for consumption and all other uses. We will be using the Boil Water Advisory process to make customers in affected areas aware that work has been done on the system and that the water quality is not certain. Information will be distributed to the affected customers whenever possible to do so. This information will also be provided to the media if it is determined that the water is contaminated. Once the water testing is completed and the water meets the prescribed standard, the media will be provided the information to be shared with readers and viewers.

If you should ever be in an area included in a boil water advisory, please respect it and follow directions provided. Bring all water to a boil, let it boil for one minute, and let it cool before using, or use bottled water. Boiled or bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, and food preparation until the boil water advisory is lifted. Boiling water kills bacteria and other organisms in water. We are concerned with the health of our customers and feel that following this practice will increase the confidence that our customers have in us and the product we provide. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about our water feel free to call me at 269-781-2210 or email me at aambler@cityofmarshall.com.