

# TROUBLESHOOTING A WATER LEAK

1. First perform a general inspection of the dwelling and property. Some common areas to check are:

## INSIDE

Toilets  
Sinks  
Showers/Bathtubs  
Dishwasher  
Washing Machines  
Plumbed Ice Machines

## OUTSIDE

Hose Bibs  
Irrigation Systems  
Water Meter  
Pressure Regulator  
Backflow Assembly  
Waterfalls/Ponds

2. Verify and check that all water is turned **OFF** inside and outside of the home at any control source.
3. Check that water meter is **NOT** measuring water usage by monitoring dial needle and or register movement.

*Note:* Small system leaks may require longer meter monitoring time to identify since meters in Shelter Bay Community register in cubic feet of flow (1 cubic foot =7.5 gallons).

*Note:* Some meter assemblies have flow indicator built into the assembly (IE; tattle tail indicator). Flow indicators are usually a wheel, triangle, dial, or needle located on the meter dial face. These indicators will turn with any flow of water through the meter.

4. If either the meter or flow indicator **DO NOT** show movement you probably don't have a leak or meter is inoperative. To check the meter simply turn on any water source to create flow through meter and verify that meter moves.

*Note:* It is a common misconception that water meters fail and can provide a higher reading, **FALSE**. When meters do fail they will read less than normal usage or no usage at all.

5. If all indications are normal to this point you may want to verify your consumption records for errors.
6. Now, if the meter indicates flow with everything off and no apparent leaks visible close the main water shut off within the dwelling. This is normally located within the garage, inline with the inlet side of the hot water heater/tank.
7. Recheck the water meter for flow. If **NO FLOW** is indicated there is a good chance that the source of the leak is within the dwelling or at least after the main shut off depending on how your house is plumbed. If the meter still indicates **FLOW** your leak is probably within the main service line to the house.
8. In either of the above cases further investigation may be warranted and or professional assistance required.
9. Last, the water purveyor's responsibility ends at the discharge side of the water meter or meter setter. Be proactive not reactive in regards to your water supply.

Here are some additional tips that can be used to aid in the prevention, identifying and locating a water leak for the homeowner.

1. Keep accurate water usage records. This information may help in the early detection by evidencing higher than normal consumption.
2. Inspect your water meter and if installed pressure regulator and backflow assemblies for leaks or damage.
3. Don't allow trees, shrubs or brush overgrow meter access. Additionally choose landscaping designs and materials wisely. Overtime rocks, roots, and other objects can damage water lines as the ground settles/moves and plants grow.
4. Regularly inspect toilets, faucets (inside and outside), hose bibs and irrigation systems for proper operation and leaks. Additionally ponds and irrigation systems should be winterized in the fall season to prevent freeze damage.
5. Close your main water supply line if extended periods away from home are anticipated.

**NOTE:** If turning off the main water supply for an extended period of time the homes water heater should be turned off as well to prevent damage to the heater.

**NOTE:** If water is not used turned or turned off for an extended period to the dwelling consideration should be given to flushing the potable water source (do a load of laundry, water the lawn or take a shower) prior to consumption due to a lowered disinfection concentration which occurs when water remains stagnant.

6. Become familiar with your water supply controls and valves. In the event of a leak or emergency this can save you a panic attack, money, property damage, and possibly costly unneeded repairs.



**Shelter Bay Community, Inc.**

**1000 Shoshone Dr. La Conner, WA. 98257**

## Shelter Bay Boil Water Alert

### **BOIL YOUR WATER BEFORE USING UNTIL OTHERWISE NOTIFIED**

#### **Why have I received a boil water notification?**

During emergency water system repairs, portions of the Shelter Bay Community Water System including your home may experience total loss of pressure. This can increase the risk of contamination due to a backflow/hack siphonage condition when ground water can enter unpressurized pipes and fittings. The notice is a precautionary measure required by the Washington State Department of Health. Shelter Bay is required to send water samples to an accredited laboratory for contaminant testing.

**We will notify residents when testing results are received within 24 - 48 hours.**

#### **Why must I boil my water?**

A boil order has been issued for the Shelter Bay Community water system because technical/physical problems in the water system has introduced the possibility of bacterial contamination.

#### **Is it necessary to boil all water in the home during an advisory or order?**

During boil water advisories or boil water orders, you should boil all water used for drinking, preparing food, beverages, ice cubes, washing fruits and vegetables, or brushing teeth. Severely immunocompromised individuals should always boil their tap water for the purposes noted above. Infant formulas should be prepared using boiled tap water, at all times. It is not necessary to boil tap water used for other household purposes, such as showering, laundry, or bathing. Adults, teens, and older children can wash, bathe, or shower; however, they should avoid swallowing the water. Toddlers and infants should be sponge-bathed. Continue reading for more information.

#### **How can I make my water safe for consumption?**

Boiling the water is the best way to ensure that it is free of illness-causing organisms. Bring water to a rolling boil for a minimum of one minute. When it cools, refrigerate the water in clean containers. (A pinch of salt per quart may improve the rather flat taste of boiled water). If you do not want to boil your water,

you can disinfect it by adding 1/8 teaspoon of bleach (common household bleach containing 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite) per gallon of water. Do not use bleach containing perfume, dyes, or other additives.

## How should tap water be boiled properly?

Water should be placed in a heat-resistant container or in an electric kettle without an automatic shut-off and brought to a rolling boil for 1 minute to kill all disease-causing organisms.

Water can also be boiled in a microwave oven using a microwave-safe container, but it is advisable to include a glass rod or wooden or plastic stir stick in the container to prevent the formation of superheated water (water heated above its boiling point, without the formation of steam). The water should then be cooled and poured into a clean container or refrigerated until you are ready to use it.

At elevations over 6,500 feet (2,000 meters) water boils at a slightly lower temperature and should therefore be boiled for at least two minutes to kill all disease-causing organisms.

## Can I use bottled water?

Buying bottled water may be a feasible alternative to boiling water. Bottled water operations are routinely inspected, and samples are periodically analyzed to ensure they meet health standards.

## I have a water treatment device; do I still need to boil my drinking water?

If the device is designed to improve the taste and odor or chemical quality of the water, such as activated carbon filters, it is still necessary to boil the water. Check with the manufacturer if you are not certain.

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What can I do with my tap water?

Drinking	No
Ice Cubes	No, and existing ice cubes should be thrown out. See below for information on ice machines.
Brushing Teeth	No

Baby's Formula	No
Washing Fruit/Vegetables	No
Preparing Food	No
Coffee, Tea, Lemonade, etc.	No. See below for information on soda dispensers and coffee makers.
Laundry	Yes
Watering Grass or Garden	Yes, but fruits/vegetables must be washed using boiled or bottled water before consumption.
Washing Hands	See below
Showers or Baths	See below
Washing Dishes	See below

### **During a boil order, can I wash my hands using tap water?**

It is recommended that you wash your hands using soap and either bottled water or boiled water. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer may also be used.

## **During a boil order, can my family take showers or baths using tap water?**

The risk of bathing in tap water is uncertain and so should be avoided particularly by people with open wounds or who are immunocompromised. For those people who choose to shower or bathe in the tap water, minimize the time spent in the water and be sure to keep your eyes and mouth closed. Babies and young children should not bathe or shower in tap water because they often swallow some water accidentally.

## **During a boil order, can I wash dishes using tap water?**

You may use a dishwasher if it has a sanitizing cycle. If it does not have a sanitizing cycle, or you are not sure if it does, you may hand wash dishes and utensils by following these steps:

1. Wash the dishes as you normally would.
2. As a final step, immerse the dishes for at least one minute in lukewarm water to which a teaspoon of bleach per gallon of water has been added.
3. Allow the dishes to completely air dry.

## **Can I use my coffee maker, ice machine, water or soda dispenser?**

None of these devices should be used if they are directly connected to your water supply. Also, filters are unacceptable for removing bacteria. Once you have been notified that the boil order has been lifted, these devices should be cleaned and sanitized according to the operator's manual for the device.

## **Can I give my pets tap water?**

Although pets are not normally affected by the same diseases as humans, caution suggests giving pets boiled or bottled water.

## **What are the symptoms of water-borne illness?**

Disease symptoms may include diarrhea, cramps, nausea and possible jaundice and associated headaches and fatigue. Symptoms may appear as early as a few hours to several days after infection and may last more than two weeks. These symptoms, however, are not just associated with disease-causing organisms in drinking water; they may also be caused by a number of other factors. If you are ill with these symptoms, contact your health care provider.

## **What if I drank the water already?**

There is nothing you can do about the exposure you have already received. If you become ill, contact your health care provider. Follow the above recommendations about using your water until you are told the water is safe again.

## **How long will the boil order remain in effect?**

Each boil order situation is different, making it impossible to predict how long the boil order will remain in effect. It will not be lifted until testing shows that the water meets public health standards. Boil water advisories or boil water orders are lifted by Shelter Bay Community when the water is considered safe and no longer poses a threat to public health.

## **What should I do when the boil water advisory or order has been lifted?**

The Shelter Bay Community will provide specific instructions. Consumers should flush water pipes within the home. When flushing it is important to carefully follow the instructions provided. Some types of water treatment devices may need to be disinfected and flushed to remove any contaminated water before being used. Depending on the type of water treatment device, the device may need to be replaced. Check with the manufacturer for details.

As we are evaluating all the available information and continue conducting tests to confirm the extent of the **possible** contamination of the system. We will inform you when tests show no bacteria and you no longer need to boil your water. We anticipate resolving the problem within the next 24 - 48 hours. Another notification will be sent out when we know more and a notice will also be placed on our web site.

For more information, please contact Shelter Bay Community Administration Office at (360) 466-3805. Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly.

This notice is being sent to you by Shelter Bay Community Administration Office. State Water System ID# WA78155Q.

