



News Release

For immediate release: April 9, 2010

(10-059)

Contacts: [Carolyn Cox](#), Office of Drinking Water 360-236-3162
Wes Crago, City of Ephrata 509-754-4601
[Gordon MacCracken](#), Communications Office 360-236-4072

Ephrata residents urged to boil drinking water

OLYMPIA — The state Department of Health and the City of Ephrata advise residents to boil their tap water or buy bottled water until further notice. Potentially harmful bacteria have been detected in the city’s water system.

The advisory affects about 7,100 people, including more than 3,200 homes and businesses in the Grant County community.

The agency’s Office of Drinking Water is working closely with the city to pinpoint the source of contamination and to fix the problem.

The Grant County Health District is working with Ephrata-area food establishments to ensure they understand the order and follow the safety precautions necessary for food preparation and water service. Local schools are sending letters home with students to explain the situation.

E. coli was detected in the water earlier in the week. The city took follow-up samples, and bacterial contamination was found in some of those samples today.

“The city, Department of Health, county health district, and county emergency management are working together to resolve this situation as safely and quickly as possible,” said Ephrata City Manager Wes Crago. “The city has called all major employers, schools, the hospital, and clinic. We’ve also hand-delivered printed notifications to every home and restaurant, and all registered phones have received a call from the county’s emergency notification system.”

The health advisory includes several precautionary steps customers should take: Use boiled water or bottled water for drinking, brushing teeth, preparing food, dishwashing, and making ice. Tap water should be boiled for one minute and allowed to cool before use.

Ephrata boil-water advisory

April 9, 2010

Page 2

The advisory will remain in effect until the city and the state health agency are satisfied there is no longer a health threat to the system's customers. The advisory will remain in effect for several days, at a minimum.

"No illnesses have been reported to the department in conjunction with this water contamination event and we're pleased with how quickly the city has responded to this situation," said Denise Clifford, director of the Office of Drinking Water. "We'll continue to work with them and the other partners to ensure that Ephrata residents have safe and reliable drinking water."

Residents who have questions should call the city at 509-754-4601.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at <http://www.doh.wa.gov> for a *healthy dose of information*.