



**SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 995, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101**

Date of Issuance: September 13, 2023

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mid-day Update on Boil Water Order

A boil water order was called into effect last evening, September 12, following a loss of pressure in the Commission's distribution system due to a large water main break. Here is the latest information:

- **Water main break**

The water main break has been isolated and plans for repair are underway. The break occurred on a 36" drinking water main in a wooded area off St. James Avenue. Heavy precipitation had undermined the soil around the main, leading to its collapse. Commission crews immediately began investigating the source of a leak when storage tanks at Provin Mountain in Agawam began to drain unusually rapidly. The leak caused a loss of pressure or water service in widespread areas throughout the Commission's retail service area in Springfield and Ludlow. The location of the leak was reported by a bystander, and Commission crews immediately responded to isolate the leak. Once isolation occurred, water pressure gradually began to restore. Pressure is now at normal levels. The Commission continued to provide filtration and chlorine disinfection throughout this incident.

- **Boil Water Order**

The Commission was in constant communication with City officials and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), which oversees drinking water systems. Pressure levels were monitored and reviewed and after thorough due diligence of data and conditions, MassDEP determined they would require a precautionary boil water alert to be issued. Low pressure below 20 psi poses the risk of suction of water through and into the water system and may result in potential bacterial contamination. A public notification was issued via reverse 911, social media, the Commission's website, a press conference, and the media. An additional "geo alert" was also sent by MEMA to the Greater Springfield region to notify residents of the boil order, especially for those that do not reside in Springfield or Ludlow but may be in the area for business, school, medical appointments, entertainment, etc.

The boil water order is expected to last 48 hours pending sample results that confirm there is no bacterial contamination.

- **Affected Area**

The affected service area includes anyone utilizing tap water in the Commission's retail drinking water service area of Springfield and Ludlow, including all residences and businesses. The Commission's wholesale communities of East Longmeadow, Longmeadow, Agawam and



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Southwick are not affected.

- **Current Actions**

Sampling is ongoing to determine adequate disinfection and no bacterial contamination. Flushing is also taking place throughout the system to reduce discoloration caused by shifting water flow in the pipes. Customers experiencing discolored water should flush their cold water tap for 10-15 minutes, wait ½ hour, then repeat as necessary. After flushing, follow boil water orders as advised.

- **Water use**

Customers using water in the affected area are reminded to continue using boiled or bottled water for drinking, ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes & food prep until further notice. Bathing is ok – do not ingest. Sponge bathe small children to avoid ingestion. Discard all ice, beverages, uncooked foods, and formula made with tap water collected **after 3 PM September 12, 2023**.

Customers may visit waterandsewer.org/boil-water to use an interactive map and look up their address to determine if they are in the affected area in Springfield and Ludlow. This notice does not apply to Springfield/Ludlow residents on wells.

- **Additional information**

Customers that call the Commission's customer service line at 413-310-3501 are advised of heavy call volumes and advises them to utilize the Commission's website (waterandsewer.org/boil-water) and social media pages (@SpfldWaterSewer, Facebook and X/Twitter) for the most up-to-date information.

MassDEP also provides the following guidelines and tips for boil water orders:

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/drinking-water-boil-orders-and-public-health-orders#-general-precautions-during-a-boil-order->

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/drinking-water-boil-orders-and-public-health-orders#-tips-for-water-use-during-a-boil-order->

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