

Important Notice for Horticulture businesses (growers, packhouses, distributors) who may be affected by a boil water notice

Health officials in Havelock North have issued a boil water notice for Council water supply.

See: <http://www.hastingsdc.govt.nz/boil-drinking-water-notice-remains-hn?page=6>

This 'boil water' notice has been issued because the Havelock North drinking water supply has been contaminated and can make people sick.

For horticultural businesses there are two issues to consider:

- ***The use of potentially contaminated water to rinse/clean produce, or to clean food surfaces which can make others sick.***
- ***Affected staff who may contaminate food.***

1. Identify water use that could contaminate food:

Water supplied to employees, including

- Drinking water
- Water for meal preparation and washing utensils, cups, glasses, cutlery etc.
- Water for handwashing
- Water used in fruit and vegetable washing and sanitising processes
- Water used to clean/sanitise equipment, produce crates, or surfaces that come into contact with food. Water used in crop production (e.g. hydroponics)

2. What should you do to manage the risk?

You should take risk management action to ensure water used in each of the above areas is fit for purpose and will ensure food is safe and suitable. For example:

- For consumption: boil water, or use alternative source (e.g. bottled)
- For hand/utensil cleaning/washing – use boiled water or treated water
- For fruit and vegetable washing and packing, including cleaning equipment – use water from a source that is confirmed as safe, treated water or source water from a registered supplier.
- Use a water sanitiser and treatments to kill *Campylobacter* and *E.coli* in wash water (if in doubt check with MPI or local councils).

If you have been using council supplied water since 1 August 2016, the products that the water has been used with may be contaminated. You must immediately contact MPI (0800 008 333) to discuss what to do next.

Staff could also be a source of contamination

It's not only the water supply that could be a risk. Staff living in the Havelock North area and may be carrying the bacteria into your business.

- Sick staff should not work with food, including harvesting, or packing.
- All staff should be extra vigilant about handwashing (with safe water) and using hand sanitiser

When can I use the water supply again without boiling it?

- When the 'boil water' notice has been lifted. Wait for the media announcement to be made that the water supply is OK to use again.
- For further information see your local council website.

More information can be found:

Information about hand-washing:

<http://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/food-safety-for-consumers/tips-for-food-safety>

Information about food safety in adverse events (including when on a boil water notice):

<http://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/adverse-events/resources-for-adverse-events/>

Refer to the Hastings District Council website for updates:

<http://www.hastingsdc.govt.nz/boil-drinking-water-notice-remains-hn?page=6>

Information about the germ that is causing the illness:

<http://www.ourhealthhb.nz/assets/News-and-Event-files/HE1211-Campylobacter-WEB.pdf>

Register of water carriers:

<http://www.drinkingwater.esr.cri.nz/carriers/carriersforregion.asp?NZRegion=NZN009>