

Boil advisory in place for Atchison and its county customers

(KAIR)--A boil water advisory has been issued for the City of Atchison, including Atchison and Doniphan County residents supplied by the city.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment, in a news release early Tuesday afternoon, said the advisory will remain in place until further notice.

Atchison County Emergency Management Director Wes Lanter, in a news release, said the advisory does include Atchison County water customers supplied by the City of Atchison, but excludes the City of Effingham.

According to information from the KDHE, the advisory does include Atchison County Rural Water Districts 1, 3, 5, and 6, as well as Doniphan County Rural Water Districts 3 and 5. That includes the cities of Lancaster and Nortonville.

Atchison City Manager Becky Berger told MSC News early Tuesday afternoon a turbidity issue led to the advisory. “We had a reading [Tuesday morning] that measured at 2 NTU, and anytime you have a measurement that exceeds 1 NTU, then [KDHE will] issue the advisory. Now, we have to get down below .35 NTU in our distribution system before they’ll lift the advisory. Currently we’re at .55 NTU.”

Berger, in a release issued early Tuesday evening, said the high readings didn’t last very long and were well under 1.0 for most of the day Tuesday. By Tuesday afternoon, those levels were consistently under 0.4.

Berger explained that flooding of the Missouri River is to blame. “When you’ve got this much water coming in, it’s just really hard to get that turbidity rate down. We have more than 80 years of combined experience among the 5 operators at our Water Treatment Plant. They’ve successfully treated Missouri River water from many flood events through the years, and this water is the most difficult they’ve encountered.”

Turbidity is a measure of the relative water clarity and is an indicator of water quality, and according to the KDHE, high turbidity may result in a loss of chlorine residuals and bacterial contamination.

All customers of the City of Atchison’s water supply are told to boil all water to be consumed for one minute prior to use.

According to a news release issued early Tuesday evening by the City of Atchison, city staff has been in contact with KDHE and other producers along the Missouri

River to determine if there are better avenues for treatment and are making tweaks to the system as the characteristics of the water continues to evolve.

The release notes that City staff is currently working to secure bottled drinking water for free distribution for those in need.

Customers should observe the following precautions until further notice:

- If your tap water appears dirty, flush the water lines by letting the water run until it clears.**
- Boil water for one minute prior to drinking or food preparation or use bottled water.**
- Dispose of ice cubes and do not use ice from a household automatic icemaker.**
- Disinfect dishes and other food contact surfaces by immersion for at least one minute in clean tap water that contains one teaspoon of unscented household bleach per gallon of water.**
- Water used for bathing does not generally need to be boiled. Supervision of children is necessary while bathing so that water is not ingested. Persons with cuts or severe rashes may wish to consult their physicians.**

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