

Water Supply Advisory October 2025

Albury Community Water Supply – Boil Water Notice

We are advising consumers on the Albury Water Supply to boil all water until further notice.

Water feeding the Albury Water Supply is drawn from a surface water source, namely the Opawa Stream. This stream receives much of its water from rainfall draining over the ground surface and into the stream and river, collecting contamination from silts, dirt, debris, and animal waste along the way.

Even when the water is visually clean, it will still have been in contact with these contaminants, and these contaminants may include bugs that can make you sick.

Bugs that make people sick are called pathogens, and it is our responsibility to protect you from becoming sick from pathogens in the water supply.

We treat the water with chlorine to protect you against some of these pathogens, but unfortunately some of them are too strong for the chlorine to be effective. These stronger pathogens remain able to make you sick, and we need to provide additional treatment steps to address them and protect your health.

Each treatment step is called a ‘treatment barrier’ and currently, the Albury supply does not have sufficient barriers to make the water safe.

We are therefore advising consumers on the Albury Water Supply to boil all water used for drinking, food preparation and brushing teeth until such time as additional treatment barriers are in place and the water is made safe.

Council is required to provide this advice to comply with the requirements of the government’s Water Services Authority - Taumata Arowai. Ultimately, the rules are there to keep people safe from harm and ensure you can make informed choices about the water you are drinking.

Further Information

Map of The Albury Water Supply Area

The area where boiling water is required are shown on the map below. If you're unsure about which water supply you're on please contact Mackenzie District Council on 03 685 9010 or email us at info@mackenzie.govt.nz and we will be happy to assist.



Making the water safe

We will need to find a solution to this problem which will take some time. One option would be to add additional treatment barriers to the current supply. There may also be other options which could involve using water from an alternative source. These options could include connecting to a supply that already supplies safe water (such as extending the Downlands scheme which supplies water to Albury village) or by other means.

Plans to provide safe water are in their infancy and will take time to develop. You should expect that the need to boil your water will remain in place for at least two years as we explore feasible solutions with the community which would enable compliance with the current legislation.

Monitoring and safety

We will continue to monitor your water and maintain the highest standard possible through our sampling and monitoring regime. This will help us understand when the risk may be heightened due to high turbidity (dirty water) levels. However, before additional treatment barriers are installed, or an alternative safe water supply is made available, the only guaranteed way to make your water safe is to boil your tap water before drinking. Boiling water is effective in treating pathogens.

This advisory is part of our commitment to communication to our community. Your health and safety continue to be our top priority. We encourage you to share this information with everyone in your household, including visitors, accommodation properties you own or manage and any properties you rent.

We understand that boiling water will be inconvenient, but we urge you to take the time to make sure your water is safe. This is even more important for people at greater risk of illness. People who may be more at risk include:

- infants and young children
- those who are pregnant or breastfeeding
- people with compromised immune systems

FAQs

Answers to commonly asked questions about this water supply advisory are available below. If you have any other questions or require further information, please contact us on 03 685 9010 or email info@mackenzie.govt.nz

I thought the Albury Water Supply operated independently of Mackenzie District Council?

The Albury Water Supply is owned by Mackenzie District Council but the day to day management is carried out by a local committee. The legal responsibility, however, lies with Mackenzie District Council as the scheme's owner.

Has something changed with our water supply?

The way we operate the scheme has not changed, however there have been changes in the regulations which we are required to adhere to and we have an obligation to let you know if there is a potential risk to your health. We will continue to monitor the water and let you know if there is any significant change to the level of risk.

What pathogens are of specific concern?

Many pathogens, such as bacteria, are killed by chlorine. Protozoa are a type of pathogen that are not affected by the chlorine we add to the water. Protozoa are a group of microscopic organisms that live in the environment and often come from animal waste. Some types, like Giardia and Cryptosporidium, can cause stomach illness if they get into drinking water, especially in people with weakened immune systems.

What is a ‘barrier’?

A protozoa barrier is a treatment step that specifically targets microscopic organisms like Giardia and Cryptosporidium. These barriers are not in place for the Albury scheme. A barrier could be a physical barrier (for example a filter) – but could also be a non-physical barrier (for example ultra violet light or ozone treatment).

Why don’t you just add a protozoa barrier?

There are different ways of achieving this, and it will take some time to establish and consider all the options before deciding on the most cost effective method for delivering safe drinking water.

Is the water still safe to drink?

Chlorination provides ongoing and effective treatment for bacteria and will continue to monitor and test to ensure we meet standards.

However, the risk of pathogens, such as protozoa, being present in the source water does exist, and this increases during significant rainfall events when animal waste, and the contaminants associated with it, are washed into the stream and river.

Why are we only hearing about this now?

The Water Services Authority - Taumata Arowai, our national water regulator, has recently updated their expectations for public communication. We are now required to inform consumers if a supply does not have sufficient barriers in place, even if the residual risk has not changed.

What is the Water Services Authority, Taumata Arowai?

The Water Services Authority, Taumata Arowai is our national drinking water regulator. Their role is to regulate drinking water suppliers like Mackenzie District Council so that they meet the requirements and standards for delivering safe drinking water. Legislation exists to ensure

drinking water is safe, and breaches can result in significant fines, both for Council and individuals responsible for managing water schemes.

What should I do if I have concerns about the water?

Council advises consumers to boil water for drinking, food preparation, or brushing teeth as a precaution. For more detailed information on boiling water, we recommend referring to the Taumata Arowai website at:

<https://www.taumataarowai.govt.nz/for-communities/emergencies/treating-water/>

No treatment is required for other uses such as washing clothes or taking a bath or shower, provided the water is not ingested. It is important to ensure that young children do not drink bath or shower water.