How much water should I store?

Standard emergency guidelines suggest that you store one gallon of water per day for each person in your household for a three-day to two-week period. Generally, a normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts (½ gallon) of water each day.

Keep in mind that you must consider your family members' needs and habits. You will have to decide the actual amount of water you store for an emergency. Your storage space and individual situation may be such that you should store less or more than the guidelines recommend. Remember, you might adjust your normal habits to get through the emergency period.

Water Storage Guidelines

1 gallon per person per day
3-day supply x 1 person = 3 gallons

14 days (2-week supply) x 1 person = 14 gallons

(number of days of water needed) x (number of persons in your home) = gallons to store

How can I store drinking water?

If your water comes from a public water supplier or is disinfected, you can store it in clean soda bottles or juice bottles with screw-on tops. Follow the directions below.

1. Thoroughly wash plastic soda bottles or juice jugs with warm, soapy water. Use containers with screw-on tops. Sanitize the container by putting one teaspoon of household liquid bleach (5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite) in one gallon of water. Pour this solution in the container and leave it there for two minutes. Pour the sanitizing solution from the container. Rinse the container with potable (suitable for drinking) water.
2. Fill bottles or jugs directly from the faucet. Cap tightly and label each container with the words "Drinking Water" and the date stored.
3. Store sealed containers in a dark, dry, and cool place.
4. If after six months you have not used the stored water, empty it from the containers and repeat steps 1 through 3 above.

What if my water source is contaminated?

Water from a contaminated source must be disinfected or purified before use. If the contaminated water contains visible particles, let the particles settle to the bottom first, then strain the water through a clean cloth or layers of paper towels before disinfecting. The water cannot be disinfected unless particles are removed by filtration first.

BOILING METHOD

Boiling is a good way to purify water. Bring the water to a rolling boil for 1 to 3 minutes. After the water has cooled, fill clean containers as outlined in Method A. (Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back in it before drinking. To restore the oxygen, pour the water back and forth between two clean containers several times.)

LIQUID BLEACH METHOD

Regular household liquid bleach contains a compound (5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite) that will disinfect water. **Do not use** bleaches that are scented, color-safe, or have added cleaners. Using regular liquid bleach containing 5.25 percent hypochlorite, add 16 drops (about **¼ teaspoon**) per gallon of water.

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The treated water should be mixed thoroughly and allowed to stand for 30 minutes before use. The water should have a slight bleach odor. If it does not, repeat the dosage and let the water stand for an additional 15 minutes before use. Fill clean containers and store as described in Method A.

Tip:

Always keep extra bottled water on hand!

The guidelines listed in this publication are the simplest options available in most communities.

The following references were used to prepare this publication:

- Food and Water in an Emergency (Federal Emergency Management Agency)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - FAQ
- Clorox Disaster Preparedness and Purifying Water

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This information has been prepared as a public service for our friends and neighbors by members of the Sandy Utah Crescent 10th Ward.

Storing Water for Emergencies

Tips and ideas for preparing and weathering through emergencies.