

Emergency Water Supplies

In an emergency, having a supply of clean water is critical to survival. You will need enough clean water for you and your family's needs for drinking, food preparation and hygiene.

Minimum Water Needs:

- Store at least one gallon per person and pet per day.
- Store at least a 3-day supply of water for each member of your family.

How and Where to Store Water:

- In a cool, dark place in your home, in each vehicle and in your workplace.
- Preferably in store-bought, factory-sealed water containers.
- Alternately in food-grade quality containers made for storing water and available from sporting goods and surplus stores and other retailers.

Avoid:

- Store-bought water past its expiration date.
- Storing water in containers that can't be sealed tightly.
- Storing water in containers that can break, such as glass bottles.
- Storing water in containers that have held toxic substances.
- Plastic milk bottles and cartons—they are difficult to clean and break down over time.

Alternate Emergency Water Sources Inside and Outside Your Home

If a disaster catches you without an adequate stored supply of clean water, you can use the water in:

- Your hot-water tank
- Pipes and faucets
- Ice cube trays

If you need to find water outside your home, try:

- Rainwater
- Streams, rivers and other moving bodies of water
- Ponds and lakes
- Natural Springs

Water from these sources must be made safer before using. Do not ever drink flood water. Avoid using water with floating material, an odor or dark color.

Ways to Make Outdoor Water Safer:

**These instructions are not for treating water to be stored. They are for treating*

water collected outside when no other water is available.

- **Straining it.** Pour the water through layers of paper towels, a clean cloth or a coffee filter to remove suspended particles.
- **Boiling it.** In a large pot or kettle, bring water to a rolling boil for one full minute. Cool it and pour it back and forth between two clean containers to improve its taste before drinking it.
- **Chlorinating it.** Using household liquid bleach that contains 5.25 to 6.0 percent sodium hypochlorite (listed on the label) as its only active ingredient, add 16 drops (1/8 teaspoon) per gallon to water in a large pot or kettle. Stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not have a slight bleach odor, repeat the dosage and let stand another 15 minutes.
- **Distilling it.** Fill a pot halfway with water. Tie a cup to the handle on the pot's lid so that the cup will hang right-side-up inside the pot when the lid is upside-down without dangling into the water. Boil the water for 20 minutes. The water that drips from the lid and collects in the cup is distilled.

None of these methods is perfect. The best solution is to use all of them. Boiling and chlorination will kill most microbes, but will not remove other contaminants, such as heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals. Distillation will kill or remove most of any remaining contaminants.