

Simple Steps to Protect Your Family

In an emergency, help may not be available for up to 72 hours. Will you be water prepared?

How will you, your family, and your home survive a disaster often depends upon how well you are prepared. The first 72 hours after a major earthquake or other disaster are critical. Public safety services will be overwhelmed. You should be prepared to be self-sufficient for at LEAST 3 DAYS following a disaster. Should the water supplied to your home or business be shut off or become unsafe to use during a disaster, we suggest the following measures.

How much water should I store?

- Store one gallon of water per person per day. Children, nursing mothers, and ill people will need more.
- Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for each person in your household for food preparation/sanitation).
- Keep extra water for pets.

How should water be stored?

Store water in clean, non-corrosive, tightly covered containers or purchase commercially bottled water. The bottles should be clearly labeled and dated, and the water changed every six months.

Should I shut off my water following an event?

Immediately after a major natural disaster, prevent contamination to your home water supply by shutting off your house valve. Do not drink, bathe in, or wash anything with tap water until advised it's safe to do so. What you can do now...

- Locate your house valve and water heater. Mark with fluorescent paint or tape so they can be found in the dark.
- Learn how to operate shut-off valves to water lines, water heater, and how to remove any covers.
- Have pipe or crescent wrenches available to turn off gas and water supplies if necessary.

How do I purify my water supply?

If water is polluted or until advised that it is safe use, follow these guidelines. Always strain water through coffee filters, paper towels, or clean cotton clothing, before treating the water.

- Boil vigorously for a minimum of 5 minutes.
- Add ordinary liquid chlorine household bleach (8 drops per gal) or iodine 2% (12 drops per gal). Do not use granular or scented forms of household bleach; they are poisonous.

What other sources of water can be used?

- Water heater: 1) turn off the gas/electric supply; 2) close inlet water valve; 3) open any hot water faucet or disconnect the hot water line at the top of the tank; and 4) drain water into a container by opening the faucet at the bottom of the heater.
- Toilet tank can be used, as long as disinfectant or coloring has not been used in the tank.
- Do not use pool or spa water as a source of drinking water. Use this water for bathing or for flushing toilets. Make sure sewer lines are intact before you flush toilets.

For more information on emergency preparedness, call your local emergency management office or chapter of the American Red Cross.