

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Step 3: Water for 3 days

Water is relatively inexpensive and easy to store - but certainly the time to store it is now! Water that we take for granted when things are normal, in an emergency becomes absolutely critical. From strictly a survival point of view, water is the most important element for your body's survival. By taking steps now to store emergency water supplies you can help minimize the affect of a disaster on you and your family.

**How much do you need?** Follow this simple equation:

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND PETS IN YOUR FAMILY \_\_\_\_\_ X 3 = \_\_\_\_\_ GALLONS

This is the *minimum* amount you should have stored. Store an extra gallon per day if you are in a hot climate, pregnant, breastfeeding, sick or for a child.

In an emergency, drink at least two quarts (or half a gallon) of water a day. The other half of the gallon can be used for food preparation and limited personal hygiene.

**If you store tap water:**

- Store water in food grade plastic containers, such as clean 2-liter soft drink bottles. Heavy duty, reusable plastic water containers are also available at sporting goods stores.
- Replace stored tap water at least once every six months.

**If you buy commercially bottled “spring” or “drinking” water:**

- Keep water in its original container, and don't re-store a bottle once it's been opened.
- Label bottles with their replacement date, and store in a cool, dark place.
- Replace commercially bottled water at least once each year.

**Things to do:**

- Find out - Is your tap water municipal water or well water? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where is the water intake valve to your home? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the phone number for your local water company? \_\_\_\_\_
- Call your water company and ask if your tap water should be “treated” before storing it. If so, how do they recommend treating it? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where will you store your emergency water? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do not store water close to toxic chemicals such as gasoline and other noxious fumes that can spoil your water supply. Store water in a cool, dark place.
- Collect and store your emergency water. (See equation above)
- Include liquid bleach with an eyedropper, and/or water purification tablets in your home emergency kit, to disinfect additional water supplies, as needed. Do not keep bleach for more than a year as it loses its strength.
- Keep a log noting the *amount* of water stored and its *replacement date*. In other words, the date the water should be changed.
- Remember... Mark your calendar now!  
Change stored tap water every 6 months and commercially bottled water once a year.

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### ***Avoid using***

- Store-bought water past the expiration or "use by" date on the container.
- Containers that can't be sealed tightly.
- Containers that can break, such as glass bottles.
- Containers that have ever held any toxic substance.
- Plastic milk bottles and cartons. They are difficult to clean and break down over time.

### ***How to clean your food-grade storage container***

1. **Wash** containers with dishwashing soap and rinse well with water.
2. **Sanitize** by swishing a solution of 1 teaspoon of liquid household chlorine bleach to a quart of water on all interior surfaces of the container.
3. **Rinse** thoroughly with clean water before use.

### ***Treating water after a disaster***

If you run out of stored drinking water, you have several sources of water already in your home that can be tapped in an emergency such as your hot water heater, water pipes, ice in the freezer, and back tank of your toilet (don't use water from a tank that contains colored disinfectant. It is poisonous.) You cannot drink swimming pool or spa water, but you can use it for flushing toilets or bathing.

### ***Treatment process***

Begin by straining any large particles of dirt by pouring the water through a couple of layers of paper towels or clean cloth. Next, purify the water one of two ways:

- **Boil** – bring to a rolling boil and maintain for 3-5 minutes. To improve the taste, pour it back and forth between two clean containers to add oxygen back.
- **Disinfect** – If the water is clear, add 8 drops of bleach per gallon. If it is cloudy, add 16. Shake or stir, then let stand 30 minutes. A slight chlorine taste and smell is normal. Instead of bleach, you can follow the directions on water purification tablets that can be purchased before hand from emergency supply dealers.

### **Resources**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.bt.cdc.gov](http://www.bt.cdc.gov)
- American Red Cross [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- CERT Los Angeles [www.cert-la.com](http://www.cert-la.com)
- Consumer advice [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)
- Water filtration and storage containers [www.beprepared.com](http://www.beprepared.com)  
[www.sosproducts.com](http://www.sosproducts.com)  
[www.quakekare.com](http://www.quakekare.com)