

Prepare in a Year



3. Water



Water quickly becomes a precious resource following many disasters. It is vital that all household members learn how to shut off the water at the main house valve so that you don't lose clean water which you could use. The effects of gravity may drain the water in your hot water and toilet tanks unless you trap it in your house by shutting off the main house valve (not the street valve in the cement box at the curb – this valve is extremely difficult to turn and requires a special tool).

Label this valve with a tag for easy identification, and make sure all household members know where it is located.

In addition to storing water, be aware of your surroundings and where you can find other sources of water. Available water sources include hot water heaters, toilet tanks, streams, lakes, rivers, etc. **Consider adding a water filter to your kits so that you can safely use water you find.**

How much water should I store?

For your household, we recommend at least two weeks' worth of water. That's one gallon per person per day to take care of drinking, cooking and hygiene needs. You might need less depending on your cooking methods and if you're using wet wipes for hygiene. Plan to drink at minimum one quart of water per person per day. Remember to have water for your pets, too!

Which containers should I use?

Plastic containers with a screw-cap lid, such as two-liter soda pop bottles or food-grade plastic jugs, work great.

Don't use glass bottles or old bleach bottles (or any container that has held a toxic substance).

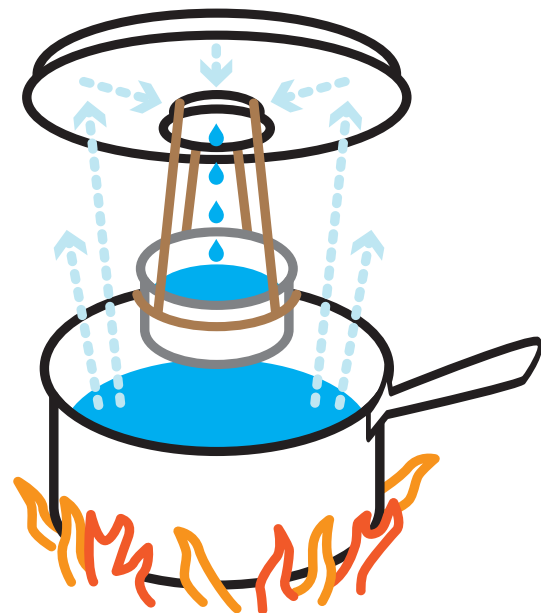
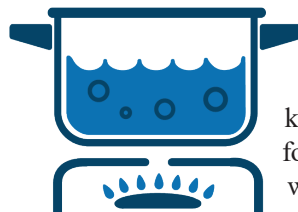
Avoid the use of plastic milk jugs. (They are difficult to seal tightly, and their plastic becomes very fragile and brittle over time).

Storing Water

We know storing 14 gallons per person is difficult, especially for large families. Having food that will not use water is one way to minimize water storage.

Consider multiple locations to store water, especially if in an apartment or small house. Thoroughly rinse out the container and the lid with water and fill it to the very top of the container. For extra safety, thoroughly rinse the container with a weak solution of liquid chlorine bleach (8-10 drops in two cups water). Empty this solution out and fill the container right to the top with fresh water.

- Seal the container tightly.
- Label it "Drinking Water" and date it.
- Store it in a cool, dark place.



Distillation – One method of purification in addition to filters and purification tablets

1. Fill a pot halfway with water.
 2. Tie a cup to the handle on the pot's lid so that the cup will hang right-side up when the lid is placed upside-down on the pot (make sure the cup is not dangling in the water).
 3. Boil the water for 20 minutes. The water that drips from the lid into the cup is distilled.
- This method allows the vapor resulting from boiling water to collect in the cup. This condensed vapor will not include salts or other impurities.

Is adding liquid bleach recommended?

The Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency says that tap water does not need anything added to it before it is stored because it has already been chemically treated. Commercially purchased water does not need anything added to it. Keep it in its original, sealed container. It is recommended that stored tap water be rotated every 6 months. Commercially sealed water is safe for up to two years; some are labeled for longer storage. The only thing that should be used to

purify water is liquid household bleach containing 6 percent sodium hypochlorite and no thickeners, soaps or scents.

Boiling water kills bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can cause illness. Treating water with chlorine bleach kills most viruses, but will probably not kill bacteria. Therefore, boiling and then adding chlorine bleach is an effective water purification method.