

Do 1 Thing...Water



Whether you get water from a municipal water system or your home has a private well, your water supply depends on having power to operate the system. During a power outage—or any disaster that can cause a power outage, such as high winds, ice storm, or flood—you may find yourself without drinkable water.

You may also need emergency drinking water if your water supply becomes contaminated. Both private wells and municipal water systems can become vulnerable to contamination in a disaster.

THE GOAL: In order to be self-sufficient during a disaster, every household should have enough water stored to last 72 hours. That equals one gallon per person, per day. Estimate one gallon for each pet in the home (or use the chart below).

Do One Thing

- Purchase and store a 72 hour supply of commercially bottled water (or more up to two weeks)
- Purchase a generator if your water comes from a private well (or make sure that your current generator is set up to power the well)
- Label utility shutoffs and teach other members of the household how (and when) to shut them off
- Bottle a 72 hour supply of water at home (as described below)

Water Needs

During an emergency, drink at least two quarts of water a day, 3-4 quarts a day if you are in a hot climate, pregnant, sick or a child.

If supplies run low, never ration water. Drink the amount you need today and look for more tomorrow.

Bottling Water at Home

If you get your water from a private well, disinfect your tap water as described on page two before bottling. If you get your water from a municipal water system, there is no need to disinfect tap water before bottling.

Sanitize bottles before filling:

- 1) **Wash** containers with dishwashing soap and rinse 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) Let air dry for at least one minute.

Use clear plastic bottles with tight sealing caps.

Milk jugs don't make good water storage containers, they don't seal well, and water stored in them can sometimes develop a plastic taste. Only use bottles that originally had beverages in them (large plastic soft drink bottles work well).

| Pets & Water | | |
|--|---|----------|
| Type | Weight | Water |
| Dog | 10 lbs | 14 oz |
| | 60 lbs | 50 oz |
| | 100 lbs | 75 oz |
| Cat | 5.5 lbs | 6 oz |
| | 10 lbs | 9 oz |
| Mice, gerbils | | 10-30 oz |
| Guinea pig | | 4-14 oz |
| Ferret | 3x the volume of pellets fed daily (1/2 cup pellets means 1-1/2 cups water) | |
| Puppies and kittens | 2-3 times adult of the same weight | |
| Pregnant/Nursing mothers | 3 times normal amount for their weight | |
| Older animals | 2-4 times normal amount for their weight | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pets on certain medication may need more water • Pets eating canned/wet food may need less water • Pets may need 2-3 x more water during hot weather | | |

Replace your water supply every six months if you bottle your own water. Always sanitize bottles before refilling them. If you purchase commercially bottled water, it should be replaced once a year. Store your water in a cool, dark place.

Emergency Sources of Drinking Water During Water System Failure

Water Heater

Do not use if the tank or fixtures have been submerged in flood water!

1. Turn off gas or electricity to water heater (turn off electricity at the fuse or breaker box, turn off gas by locating the valve supplying the hot water heater and turning the valve handle so that it crosses—is not lined up with—the gas line)
2. Turn off water intake valve (should be located near the water heater)
3. Open the drain at the bottom of the tank
4. Turn on a hot water faucet (water will drain from the tank, not the faucet)

Discard the first few gallons if they contain rust or sediment. Do not turn the gas or electricity back on until the tank is refilled.

Pipes

1. Turn off main water valve where the water comes into the house (usually near the water meter if you have city water).
2. Let air into the pipes by turning on the highest faucet in your house.
3. Get water from the lowest faucet in your house (never get water from faucets that have been submerged in flood water)

This is also the way to drain pipes if you are advised to do so (usually to avoid pipes breaking in freezing temperatures). Locate utility shutoffs before a disaster occurs. Teach other family members where they are and how (and when) to shut off utilities. Consider marking shutoffs with brightly colored tape.

Ice

If you have freezer space, consider freezing part of your water supply. This has the added advantage of keeping food in the freezer cold longer during a power outage.

Toilet Tank

This should be a last resort. Use only water from the tank, *never the bowl*.

Water Contamination

In some cases, the water distribution system may be functioning, but the water itself may be not be safe to drink.

Using bottled water is preferable, but if it is not available tap water can be disinfected by boiling vigorously for one minute. If you cannot boil water:

1. Add six drops of bleach per gallon of water
2. Stir well
3. Let stand for 30 minutes before use

Water filters may not remove all contaminants. Take additional steps to disinfect filtered water. You can also use water purification tablets, available at most pharmacies. Always follow emergency instructions.

Useful Measurements

2 liters = ½ gallon
1 gallon = 16 cups
1 gallon = 128 ounces
1 gallon = 4 quarts
1 quart = 4 cups
1 quart = 32 ounces

For more information

http://www.redcross.org/preparedness/cdc_english/FoodWater.asp

<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/animalsafety.html>