



Preparedness Tips

For more information contact the Emergency Services Division at 510-577-3351

Storing Water for an Emergency

Part A

How Much Water Do I Need?

You should store at least one gallon of water per person per day. A normally active person needs at least one-half gallon of water daily just for drinking.

Additionally, in determining adequate quantities, take the following into account:

- Individual needs vary, depending on age, physical condition, activity, diet, and climate.
- Children, nursing mothers, and ill people need more water.
- Very hot temperatures can double the amount of water needed.
- A medical emergency might require additional water.

How Should I Store Water?

To prepare the safest and most reliable emergency supply of water, it is recommended you purchase commercially bottled water. Keep bottled water in its original container and do not open it until you need to use it.

Observe the expiration or “use by” date.

Store in a cool, dark place.

If You Are Preparing Your Own Containers of Water

It is recommended you purchase food-grade water storage containers from surplus or camping supplies stores to use for water storage.

Before filling with water, thoroughly clean the containers with dishwashing soap and water, and rinse completely so there is no residual soap. Follow directions on filling the container with water. (Instructions are on the next page.)

If you choose to use your own storage containers, choose two-liter plastic soft drink bottles – not plastic jugs or cardboard containers that have had milk or fruit juice in them. Milk protein and fruit sugars cannot be adequately removed from these containers and provide an environment for bacterial growth when water is stored in them. Cardboard containers also leak easily and are not designed for long-term storage of liquids.

Also, do not use glass containers because they can break and are heavy.





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Part B

If You Are Storing Water in Plastic Soda Bottles:



- Thoroughly clean the bottles with dishwashing soap and water, and rinse completely so there is no residual soap.
- Sanitize the bottles by adding a solution of 1 teaspoon of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach to a quart of water.
- Swish the sanitizing solution in the bottle so that it touches all surfaces.
- After sanitizing the bottle, thoroughly rinse out the sanitizing solution with clean water.
- You are now ready to fill the bottles with water.



Filling Water Containers:



- Fill the bottle to the top with regular tap water. If the tap water has been commercially treated from a water utility with chlorine, you do not need to add anything else to the water to keep it clean.
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- If the water you are using comes from a well or water source that is not treated with chlorine, add two drops per quart of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach to the water.
 - Tightly close the container using the original cap. Be careful not to contaminate the cap by touching the inside of it with your finger.
 - Place a date on the outside of the container so that you know when you filled it.
 - Store in a cool, dark place. Replace the water every six months if not using commercially bottled water.