

HOW TO: PREPARE EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLIES

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EMERGENCY DISINFECTION OF DRINKING WATER

In an emergency situation, such as an earthquake, flood, or water pipe break, water service may be interrupted for a significant period of time. In these situations, Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) recommends using only bottled water, boiled water, or disinfected water until regular water service is restored.

EMWD recommends stocking a home emergency kit with a minimum three-day supply of water. A typical supply is one gallon of water per person per day. To prepare and store an emergency supply of water, follow these steps:



USE TWO-LITER SOFT DRINK/JUICE BOTTLES

These bottles are made from long-lasting plastic and will not impart taste or cause discoloration of water if properly cleaned prior to storage.



CLEAN & SANITIZE STORAGE CONTAINER

Wash container using mild dish soap. Sanitize using 1-tsp of household chlorine bleach in 1-qt of water. Cover, shake, wait 30 seconds, rinse, and air dry.



FILL CONTAINER WITH COLD TAP WATER

Fill each container as full as possible. Completely filling each container will minimize surface exposure to trapped air when closing the container.



SEAL, LABEL & STORE IN COOL, DARK PLACE

Be sure to seal container as tight as possible. Label container with the fill/refill date. Pick a storage place that will be accessible in the event of an emergency.

In circumstances where stored water supplies are limited or have been exhausted, boiling and/or disinfecting available water can be done to kill most disease-causing microorganisms that may be present in untreated water. However, it is important to note that boiling and/or disinfection will not destroy other possible contaminants; such as heavy metals, salts, and most other chemicals.

BOIL WATER

If water is cloudy, let it settle and filter it through a clean cloth, paper towel, or coffee filter. Bring water to a rolling boil for at least one minute. Let water cool naturally and store it in clean, sealed containers. Note: At altitudes above 5,000 feet, boil water for three minutes.

Tip: To improve flat taste, add a pinch of salt per quart or liter of water.



Do you have questions about EMWD water quality? Contact our Water Quality staff 951.928.3777, ext. 3327.



EMWD HELPFUL HINTS

- No need to buy commercially bottled water.
- EMWD tap water is of the highest quality and meets or surpasses all State and Federal safety standards.
- Two 2-Liter Bottles ≈ One Gallon
- Water prepared/stored this way should last up to six months.

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DISINFECT WATER USING HOUSEHOLD BLEACH

If boiling water is not an option, use household bleach to disinfect the water. Only use regular, unscented chlorine bleach products that are suitable for disinfection and sanitation as will be indicated on the product label. The label may say the active ingredient contains 6% or 8.25% of sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented, color safe, or bleaches with added cleaners.

Items Needed:

- Clean Cloth, Paper Towel or Coffee Filter
- Unscented Chlorine Bleach Product (household bleach suitable for disinfection and sanitation)
- Medicine Dropper or Measuring Spoons

If water is cloudy, let it settle and filter it through a clean cloth, paper towel or coffee filter.

Using the table below to determine the amount of bleach, use dropper or measuring spoon to add bleach to the water. Stir and let stand for 30 minutes.



Bleach to Water Dosage Guide

Volume of Water	Amount of 6% Bleach*	Amount of 8.25% Bleach*
1 Quart/Liter	2 drops	2 drops
1 Gallon	8 drops	6 drops
2 Gallons	24 drops (1/4 tps)	12 drops (1/8 tsp)
4 Gallons	32 drops (1/3 tsp)	24 drops (1/4 tsp)
8 Gallons	64 drops (2/3 tsp)	48 drops (1/2 tsp)

*Bleach may contain 6% or 8.25% sodium hypochlorite

The water should have a slight chlorine odor. If chlorine odor is not present, repeat the dosage and let the water stand for another 15 minutes.

Note: If the chlorine taste is too strong, pour water from one clean container to another and let it stand for a few hours before use.

RESOURCES & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

US EPA. (2017, September). Emergency Disinfection of Drinking Water. Retrieved from www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/emergency-disinfection-drinking-water

CDC. (2023, April 19). Cleaning and Storing and Emergency Water Supply. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/drinking/cleaning-preparing-storage-containers.html

US DHS. (2021, February 2). Water. Retrieved from www.ready.gov/water

QUICK TIP

Only use water that has been properly disinfected for:

- Drinking
- Cooking
- Making any prepared drink
- Washing dishes
- Brushing teeth

