



# WATER STORAGE GUIDE

*Emergency Water Planning for Your Household*

## HOW MUCH WATER DO YOU NEED?

FEMA and the Red Cross recommend a **minimum of 1 gallon per person per day** for drinking and basic hygiene. This is the minimum — you may need more if it's hot, if someone is sick, pregnant, or nursing, or if you have pets.

### Water Storage Calculator

Household Size	3-Day Supply (Minimum)	1-Week Supply	2-Week Supply (Recommended)
1 person	3 gallons	7 gallons	14 gallons
2 people	6 gallons	14 gallons	28 gallons
3 people	9 gallons	21 gallons	42 gallons
4 people	12 gallons	28 gallons	56 gallons
5 people	15 gallons	35 gallons	70 gallons
6 people	18 gallons	42 gallons	84 gallons

**Don't forget pets!** Add 1 oz of water per pound of body weight per day for dogs and cats.

## WATER STORAGE OPTIONS

### Easiest Option: Commercially Bottled Water

Pre-packaged, sealed, and ready to drink. A case of Kirkland Signature water (40 bottles, 16.9 oz each) = just over 5 gallons, about \$4. Pre-portioned bottles make rationing easier — you can see exactly how much you have left.

### Larger Containers

Use only food-grade containers. Options include 5-7 gallon stackable jugs (recommended), or 55-gallon drums for those with space.

## Container Weight Reference

Container Size	Weight When Full	Notes
1 gallon	8 lbs	Easy for anyone to handle
5 gallons	40 lbs	Manageable for most adults
7 gallons	56 lbs	Heavy — consider your mobility
55 gallons	458 lbs	Not portable — needs pump/siphon

**The best water storage system is the one you can actually use.** If you can't lift it, store smaller containers.

### What NOT to Use

- Old milk jugs — milk proteins breed bacteria, plastic breaks down quickly
- Containers that held chemicals or non-food liquids

## STORING TAP WATER SAFELY

If you fill your own containers from the tap:

1. **Clean containers** — Wash with dish soap, rinse thoroughly. Sanitize with 1 tsp bleach per quart of water, swish, let sit 1 minute, rinse.
2. **Fill completely** — Less air = less chance for bacteria to grow.
3. **Add bleach for long-term storage** — 2 drops per gallon keeps water fresh for months.
4. **Label with date** — Rotate every 6-12 months.
5. **Store properly** — Cool, dark location away from chemicals and strong odors.



## WHAT TO DO DURING A BOIL WATER NOTICE

Boil water notices happen when water mains break, pressure drops, or contamination is detected. This can happen anytime — not just during disasters.

### When under a boil notice, DO NOT:

- Drink tap water
- Brush teeth with tap water
- Wash produce with tap water
- Make ice with tap water

**Use your stored water instead — this is exactly what it's for.**

### If you must use tap water during a boil notice:

#### **BOILING (Best Method)**

1. Bring water to a full rolling boil
  2. Keep at rolling boil for 1 minute
  3. Let cool before drinking
- At altitude above 6,500 ft: boil for 3 minutes

### If you can't boil (power out, no stove):

#### **BLEACH DISINFECTION (Backup Method)**

Use regular unscented liquid chlorine bleach (5-9% sodium hypochlorite)

For CLEAR water: 8 drops per gallon, stir, wait 30 minutes

For CLOUDY water: Filter first, then 16 drops per gallon, wait 30 minutes

You should smell faint chlorine. If not, repeat and wait 30 more minutes.

**WRITE THIS ON YOUR BLEACH BOTTLE: "8 drops/gallon, 30 min"**

**After the boil notice is lifted:** Run your taps for a few minutes to flush the lines before using water normally.

## GRAVITY WATER FILTERS

Gravity filters are countertop systems that filter water without electricity — pour water in the top and it filters down into a reservoir.

**Some gravity filters can replace boiling** during a boil water notice — but only if they're rated for purification (removing bacteria, viruses, and parasites), not just filtration (improving taste).

**Check the specs before you buy.** Look for filters rated to remove pathogens, not just improve taste.

## YOUR WATER STORAGE PLAN

People in household:	_____	Pets:	_____
3-day minimum (people x 3 gal):	_____	gallons	
2-week goal (people x 14 gal):	_____	gallons	
Storage location:	_____		
Last rotation date:	_____		
Next rotation due:	_____		

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