

# WATER STORAGE

## Why Store Water

Natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes may pollute or disrupt water supplies. Water is more essential than food in sustaining life. It is wise to have an emergency storage of at least 14 gallons of water per person. To protect the quality of the water it must be pure to start with, treated to prevent microbial growth, and stored in clean, food grade containers.

## Pre-Storage Treatments

To prevent build up of bacteria and/or algae, use these treatment guidelines:

- **Household bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite)**  
8 drops per gallon or 1/2 teaspoon per gallon, if clear.  
16 drops per gallon or 1 teaspoon per gallon, if cloudy.  
Let stand for 30 minutes before use. (Water taste can be improved by pouring it back and forth several times between two containers to dissipate chlorine and aerate the water.)
- **Iodine (2% solution)**  
12 drops per gallon, if clear.  
24 drops per gallon, if cloudy.  
Let stand for 30 minutes before use.

## Pre-Use Treatments

If the water is not pure, use one of the following treatment methods:

- **Filtration** - There are many good water filters on the market. The activated charcoal type can also remove bad tastes. Some models also add chemicals to kill bacteria.
- **Chemical** - In addition to the ones listed in the pre-storage treatment paragraph above, other good treatment chemicals may be acquired from most outdoor supply stores.
- **Boiling** - Boil water for three to five minutes, depending on elevation (the higher the elevation, the longer the water should be boiled).
- **Distilling** - This is the most effective method of water purification. However, it is slow and the equipment required is expensive. If you plan to use this method, advance preparation will be necessary.

## Water Storage Containers

Good water storage containers are airtight, resistant to breakage, and heavy enough to hold water. They need to have a lining that won't rust or affect the flavor of the water. The following containers are commonly used:

- **Plastic Juice or Soda Bottles** - Clear plastic containers made of P.E.T.E. plastic. Used containers should be food containers that are thoroughly cleaned, rinsed, and dried.
- **Heavy Plastic Buckets or Drums** - Should be food grade.
- **Water Heater** - Close the inlet valve immediately after the water supply is disrupted.
- **Water Beds** - A double waterbed holds about 200 gallons of water. This water contains an algicide. *Do Not Drink It.* For non-food usage only, such as clothes washing and general cleaning.
- **Bleach Bottles** - Not food grade plastic. For non-food usage only. This type of bottle tends to turn brittle over several years and is likely to leak.

**Container Storage Note:** Plastic water storage containers should be protected from light and heat. Freezing may be damaging to some types of water storage containers. Storage should be in areas where potential leakage would not cause damage to the home.