

# FOCUS: EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY



This action sheet is produced as part of the Southern California Earthquake Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an effort to increase the level of individual and family preparedness in this region. It is coordinated by eight southern California counties and the Southern California Earthquake Preparedness Project.

## WHY

There may be significant damage to regional and local water supply and storage systems after an earthquake. Limited or no access to normal water supplies may be available, especially during drought years. Water is essential. You and your family can survive for many days without food but for only a short time without water. The female body is 54% water; the male body is 60% water. We lose water daily through normal processes.

The stress associated with catastrophic events such as earthquakes can affect the body in ways that can lead to significantly higher levels of fluid loss. Increased perspiration is a good example of this. The lack of water can affect the body's senses, thinking, reaction time and energy in a matter of hours. A 10% loss of body water is serious; a 20-22% loss is fatal. You don't want to be physically hampered when the ability to think and act quickly is crucial simply because you did not take the time to store a few gallons of water.



California Earthquake Preparedness

# MAY



## HOW MUCH DO I NEED

A normally-active person requires at least 1/2 gallon of water per day for drinking and additional water for brushing teeth, bathing and washing dishes. *Store at least a three-day supply.*

## HOW DO I STORE IT

Buy one-gallon jugs at your market, or store tap water in well-washed soft drink bottles. Clearly mark the bottles with the current date. Use the water and discard the bottles within one year. Do not use empty bleach bottles; they are not "food grade" bottles, and the plastic may leach into the water. Another option is to buy five-gallon bottles from water distributors. As long as the seals are not broken, they can be kept in a cool, dark place for many years. Do not store water with your other supplies. Water leaks may damage them.

## OTHER EMERGENCY WATER SOURCES

**Ice cubes:** Melt and use.

**Toilet tank** (not the bowl!): Contains clean water which can be used directly from the tank. Do not use this water if you have added any chemical treatments (cleaners) to the tank.

**Hot water heater:** Be sure your hot water heater is secured with metal strapping (plumber's tape) and bolts. To drain water from the tank, open the valve at the top of the tank or turn on a hot water faucet somewhere in the house. Put a clean container under the tap at the bottom of the hot water heater. Use this tap to fill the container when you need water.

## HOW TO PURIFY WATER

**Boiling:** Boil vigorously for 10 minutes.\*

**Purification tablets:** Follow the directions on the container. These tablets are available at drug stores and camping supply stores.

**Bleach purification:** Use household liquid chlorine bleach. Check the label. It should contain 5.25% hypochlorite to be effective and safe. Use an eye dropper to add liquid chlorine bleach in the amount indicated below. Stir and wait 30 minutes for the water to purify before you begin using it.

### EXPERIENCE SAYS...

- Store bottles of water on the floor, rather than on shelves from which they could fall and burst.
- Store handkerchiefs, coffee filters or filtering cloths along with the water.
- Check the water you stored last May. Date, rotate and check for leakage.
- Consider purchasing water purification tablets.

Amount of Water	Amount of Bleach If Water Is Clear	Amount of Bleach** If Water Is Cloudy
1 quart	2 drops	4 drops
1 gallon	8 drops	16 drops
5 gallons	1/2 teaspoon	1 teaspoon

\*Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791.

\*\*Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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*Get it done in '91*



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