



# Emergency Drinking Water

Because natural disasters or other emergencies can interrupt the water supply for hours, days or even weeks, it's critical that every household store enough water to meet its members' needs during times of crisis.

Most people need to drink at least two quarts (64 ounces) of water per day. Warm weather can double the amount needed as the body uses water for cooling. The amount of water you need will also depend on the total amount of juices, soups, other drinks and high moisture foods that are available. Additional water will be needed for food preparation and hygiene.

Water can be stored in food grade plastic or glass containers with tight fitting screw-on caps. Prepare containers by washing them thoroughly with hot tap water and dish detergent.

## Treating Water for Storage

Commercially sold bottled water requires no treatment prior to storage. To treat tap water for storage, use liquid household chlorine bleach that contains 5.25% sodium hypochlorite according to the chart below:

- 4 drops bleach per quart or liter container of water
- 8 drops bleach per 2-quart, 2-liter, or ½ gallon container of water
- 16 drops bleach, or 1/4 teaspoon, per gallon or 4-liter container of water

Add bleach to the water in a clean container, mix thoroughly by stirring or shaking and let stand for 30 minutes. Chlorine should be detectable by odor after the 30 minute waiting period. If the water does not smell like chlorine at that point, repeat the dose and let it stand another 15 minutes. Place caps on containers and attach labels describing the contents and when each was prepared.

Water stored in metal containers should not be treated, prior to storage, with chlorine since the chlorine compound is corrosive to most metals. Therefore, only very pure water should be stored in metal containers.

Water should be stored in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. Because most plastic beverage containers degrade over time, store them away from heat and light to prevent leakage.

## For More Information

**Orange County Fire Authority**  
(714) 573-6200  
[www.ocfa.org](http://www.ocfa.org)

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**  
[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**  
[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)