

supply at least every six months to ensure freshness. Store the water in quality plastic containers instead of glass to minimize breakage. Paper containers such as milk cartons should be avoided as well, since they will weaken over time. Whatever the container, make sure it has been washed well with a non-toxic soap and rinsed well before filling. Do not use containers that once contained chemicals or toxic material.

### **What is a Boil Water Order?**

A Boil Water Order is issued by public health officials when there is a concern that a disaster or other event has the potential to contaminate the water supply. Boiling your water is an effective way to ensure that your water is safe to drink. When a Boil Water Order is issued, you should make sure that any water used for drinking is boiled for at least three minutes

(five minutes at higher altitudes) to make sure that the water is safe. If you still have power, refrigerate the water after boiling.

### **How will I know when the water is safe again?**

Your public health officials will lift the Boil Water Order when they determine the water is safe to drink. Listen to your local news for status and updates.



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# **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

Storing Water for Emergencies



**D**isaster can strike at any time and in any community. Your local water utility takes extraordinary measures to protect both the availability and quality of your water supply. Although no amount of preparation can prevent a disaster, effective planning can limit its effects. One of the most important supplies to have on hand in the event of a disaster is safe drinking water.



### **How much water should I have on hand?**

A good rule of thumb is to store one gallon (about 4 litres) of water per person per day. You should plan for at least three days. For example, a family of four should store 12 gallons (about 45 litres) of water,

one for each person and enough for three days. Remember, you'll need more water in hot temperatures and for strenuous activities. People with special needs such as nursing mothers, young children, and family members with illnesses also require more water.



If you have advance warning of a disaster or other possible disruption of your water supply, fill bathtubs, sinks, and all available containers with water to supplement the water you have stored. If you are caught unprepared, the drain on your hot water heater can supply you with a good amount of water in an emergency.

### **How long can I store tap water safely?**

As long as disinfected tap water is stored in a clean, airtight container and in a cool location, the water should remain safe indefinitely. As a general rule, change your emergency water