

## Water

The human body needs water to survive. Every cell needs it to keep functioning. It's estimated that you could only last three to four days without water.

In Oregon we're use to having a plentiful supply of clean water available at the turn of a faucet. But in an emergency, that resource may not be available.

That's why one of the first things you should plan for is having a supply of safe drinking water. That means storing water you will need and knowing how to make contaminated water safe to drink.

### How much water?

You will need water to drink, to prepare food, and to maintain hygiene. It's recommended you plan...

- ◆ One gallon per person per day.
- ◆ Add more for pets and hygiene.
- ◆ Plan to have a 2-week supply. Depending on the emergency, it can take that long for water supplies to reach a disaster area.

For a family of four this means you will want to have access to 56 gallons of clean water!

### How do I manage that?

The best water plan is to have multiple methods to both store and treat water.

**Don't wait until you have the "perfect" plan.** At around \$1.00 per gallon jug, you can pick up three gallons of water at the grocery store for each member of your family. Write the date you purchased the water on the jugs and put them under your bed. In an emergency this will help get you through a 3-day disaster.



It will also give you a bit of "breathing" room while you work on a more complete emergency water plan for you and your family.

## Are You Prepared?

When disaster strikes, your government will focus on public safety, helping the extremely vulnerable, and getting critical services back in operation.

Depending on the emergency, you may need to be self-sufficient for several weeks.

The best way to protect yourself and your family is to be prepared. That's why we've designed this "Basic Preparedness" series. While the information provided here does not cover every situation, it should provide enough information so you can take that first step.

More information can be found on our website at [www.co.benton.or.us/sheriff](http://www.co.benton.or.us/sheriff).

*Para su conveniencia el sitio web de la Oficina del Sheriff del Condado de Benton se puede traducir a otros idiomas. Para elegir su idioma preferido haga "clic" en el menú "select languages" al fondo de la página.*



### Sign Up for Emergency Alert

We encourage you to sign up for the Linn-Benton Emergency Alert system. This lets us notify you quickly of emergency or safety events. This system is only used for testing and in emergencies. To sign up, go to the Sheriff's Office webpage and click on the "Emergency Alert" button. If you don't have internet or need help signing up, call us at 541-766-6864.

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# WATER



**BASIC  
PREPAREDNESS**  
A series on the simple steps  
you can take to  
prepare for an emergency



**Benton County Sheriff's Office**  
Emergency Services Division

## Your Water Plan

As you develop your water storage/treatment plan, here are some things to think about...

- ◆ Water is heavy. A gallon of water weighs a little over 8 pounds. Your plan should include storing water in a variety of container sizes to make sure you have enough and can use what you have.
- ◆ Use containers that are “food grade.”
- ◆ Choose containers that can be used more than once. Consider how you will empty and refill your containers.
- ◆ Stored water should be rotated every 6 months.

## Storage Locations

Where you store your water will depend on your particular living situation.

- ◆ Sunlight breaks down plastic so try to store your water in a cool, dry place or use UV-coated containers.
- ◆ Make sure the containers you choose don't leak.
- ◆ Consider storing water in different locations. If part of your home or apartment is damaged in a disaster, it will give you more options to retrieve your water.
- ◆ You can store your water outside in storage sheds or boxes. If the weather turns extremely hot or cold, consider bringing the water inside.
- ◆ In case of an earthquake, store your water where it won't fall, or strap your containers to your home's structure.
- ◆ Don't place your containers directly on cement but place them on a wooden board or 2 x 4s.

Locations you might consider: under your bed, in a closet, under your desk, in your pantry, on a balcony or patio, in the garage.

Basically, wherever you have space!

## Container Options/Water Sources

**16-ounce pre-packaged water bottles.** These are not recommended. Storage is difficult because of the number needed, they are single-use, and the plastic waste can't always be recycled.

**16-ounce sports bottles.** Many of us have sports bottles we keep for biking, hiking, or other activities. Consider storing these filled with water. Its an easy, portable addition to your overall water plan.



**1 gallon pre-packaged water bottles.** These larger-sized pre-packaged bottles are a good temporary measure. They are portable and relatively easy to store but have the same disadvantages of the 16-oz. bottles.



**3–5 gallon containers.** Several manufacturers offer re-usable, food grade containers in sizes ranging from 3–5 gallons. Features include handles, stackable shapes, pour spouts, etc. You can find them wherever camping/RV supplies are sold. They vary widely in cost. A good investment is to have at least one of this size container for each member of your household.

**30–55 gallon barrels or storage systems.** Barrels for storing water will usually be stored outside so look for a barrel that's UV coated to ensure light isn't getting into the barrel. It should also be BPA free and durable so it won't warp, crack, or split easily. Some manufacturers also provide home water systems with stacking water barrels or boxes. An internet search of “emergency water systems” will provide you with many options. Follow manufacturer's instructions when filling.

**Hot Water Tank.** In an emergency, the water stored in your hot water tank can be treated and used. Do not use water from toilet tanks or bowls, radiators, or pools/spas.

**Outside Water Sources.** Rivers, streams, and rainwater can be treated and used for drinking. However, don't count on this source. Depending on the disaster, the water may be contaminated beyond treatment. Never drink flood water.

## Rotating Your Water Supply

- ◆ Your water supply should be rotated every 6 months. A good reminder is to plan to rotate it on or near New Year's Day and again on or near the Fourth of July.
- ◆ If possible, don't just dump your supply. Drink it, water your plants, or use it for washing.
- ◆ Using a commercial water preserver can extend the life of your supply.
- ◆ If you don't rotate your supply, you will need to treat your water to sanitize/decontaminate it.

## Treating Your Water

**Boiling.** Boiling is the safest method of treating water. Bring water to a rolling boil for at least 1 full minute. Add a minute for each 1000 feet of elevation above sea level.

**Chlorinating.** Water can be purified with unscented household bleach. Add 8 drops of bleach per gallon of water and wait 30-60 minutes. If water does not have a faint scent of chlorine add a second dose of bleach. If that does not produce an odor, discard the water.

Bleach degrades over time so make sure you have a plan for rotating it.

**Filtrating.** A number of filtration products are available that would allow you to treat and remove contaminants from water. These include straw, pump, gravity, and reverse osmosis filters. An internet search of “water filtration systems” can provide you with information about the pros and cons of each of these methods.

*This brochure is not intended to provide everything you will need to know about storing and treating water. But we hope it has given you some ideas and simple steps to get you started. Don't be paralyzed by looking for the “perfect” solution. Just take that first step and refine as you go!*