



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE • COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 49-92-DES

DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

## HOW TO STORE AND PURIFY WATER

### WHY?

In a disaster such as a large magnitude earthquake, water systems will most likely suffer damage and safe water will not be available. Store a two (2) weeks supply of water for each family member. A minimum of two (2) gallons per person per day, should cover drinking, first aid, personal hygiene and cooking needs. Include water provisions for pets. Learn how to shut off the water supply to your house or business.

### HOW TO STORE WATER:

Water should be stored in plastic containers preferably that are made of heavy opaque plastic, with tight fitting, screw-on caps. Mark the date on containers when stored and place in a cool dark location. Use within six months and replace. A small amount of plain household bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite - 8 drops per gallon) will prevent bacterial growth. Commercially bottled water can be stored (unopened) for several years without affect to quality and taste.

### OTHER EMERGENCY SOURCES:

Your household water heater tank can supply 30-60 gallons of water for an emergency supply. When not under pressure (main valve to house shut off), the tank may have to be vented by opening the hot water faucet or disconnecting the hot water line at the top of the heater. Turn off the gas or electricity to the tank before draining off water for emergency use. Melted ice cubes, toilet reservoir tanks (without disinfectants), and juices from canned foods may also be used.

### HOW TO PURIFY WATER:

**BOILING:** Boil vigorously for 3-5 minutes. To improve taste, pour from one container to another several times to aerate.

**PURIFICATION TABLETS:** Available at most drug stores. Follow directions on the package.



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**BLEACH**

**PURIFICATION:** Plain, liquid, household bleach (sodium hypochlorite 5.25%) can be used. Add bleach according to the emergency disinfection table below. Mix thoroughly and let stand 30 minutes. **DO NOT** use bleach that contains perfumes or ingredients other than hypochlorite as they may be toxic.

**IODINE:** Tincture of iodine can also be used for disinfection. Mix thoroughly and let stand 30 minutes, using the amounts listed in the emergency disinfection table below.

**EMERGENCY DISINFECTION TABLE:**

AMOUNT of WATER	BLEACH		IODINE	
	CLEAR WATER	CLOUDY WATER	CLEAR WATER	CLOUDY WATER
1 Quart	2 drops	4 drops	5 drops	10 drops
1 Gallon	8 drops	16 drops	20 drops	½ tsp.
5 Gallons	½ tsp.	1 tsp.	1 tsp.	2 tsp.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- Excessive turbidity will greatly reduce the efficiency of the disinfecting chemical or process. Turbid water should be filtered through a paper towel or several layers of clean cloth prior to disinfection.
- If liquid pool chlorine (10% available chlorine) is used, add half of the amounts shown on chart above.

\*Document available in an alternate format upon request

OFFICES IN: RIVERSIDE, BLYTHE, CORONA, HEMET, INDIO, MURRIETA AND PALM SPRINGS  
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