

Are You Earthquake-Ready?

After an earthquake, temporary water and sewer system outages may be unavoidable. Take some simple steps to be prepared.

STORE ENOUGH TAP WATER OR BOTTLED WATER TO LAST THREE TO SEVEN DAYS.

You'll want one to two gallons per person per day of water. Store tap water in clean, airtight food-grade plastic containers and keep it in a dark, cool place. Do not store tap water in used milk containers or in glass. Label each container with the date it was stored and replace your containers every six months.

BE PREPARED TO DISINFECT ADDITIONAL WATER SUPPLIES TO SUPPLEMENT WHAT YOU STORE.

Your emergency/disaster supplies should include a heat source, such as a camping stove, plus a clean pot, measuring spoons or a clean medicine dropper, and a sealed bottle of regular, unscented liquid bleach with no additives. Replace your bottle of bleach every six months.

DISINFECT ANY QUESTIONABLE WATER SUPPLIES.

Properly stored water is safe to drink. Disinfect your stored water if the container is leaking or was not sealed airtight, it has been stored longer than six months, has an unusual odor, or you have other concerns about its safety. Boiling is the preferred method to disinfect water. If you have no power, use a camp stove to disinfect water by boiling it for at least two minutes after it reaches a vigorous rolling boil. If boiling is not possible, add a measured $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon or 16 drops of bleach to each gallon of water and then let stand 30 minutes. A slight chlorine taste and smell is normal.

RESERVE STORED WATER FOR DRINKING AND FOOD PREPARATION.

Depending on the severity of damage following a quake, it may be difficult for public agencies to get emergency water supply distribution locations up and running quickly. Avoid using your personal emergency drinking water supply for washing and cleaning. If you run out of stored drinking water, you can strain and treat water from your water heater. To strain, pour the water through a clean cloth or layers of paper towels. Then disinfect the water as described above. Consider using water from the toilet tank (not the bowl, and do not use water from the tank if it has a blue dye or other cleaner) or perhaps a pool or other outdoor water source for washing and cleaning purposes.

BE PREPARED WITH A SANITATION KIT FOR AN OUTAGE THAT COULD PREVENT TOILETS FROM FLUSHING.

Your kit should include toilet paper, wipes and hand sanitizers, plastic garbage bags, a bucket, and a deodorizing chemical such as lime, bleach, or chemicals sold for camping.

For more information about emergency preparedness, go to www.redcross.org/prepare or www.ready.gov.

