

## Preparing for Disasters and Emergencies: *Storing Water for Emergencies*



We can't predict when a disaster or emergency that could limit our mobility and access to needed supplies will occur. During any emergency, having an ample supply of clean, safe water is a *top* priority. It is recommended that *at least one gallon of water per person per day be stored* for emergency situations.

### How to Store Water



- **Type of Container:**  
Use food-grade plastics, glass, fiberglass, or enamel-lined metal that has been *thoroughly* washed. Soft drink bottles are great! *Never* use a container that has previously contained a toxic substance.
- **Type of Seal:**  
Tightly seal containers. Be sure to label containers and include the date filled.
- **Location:**  
Store your water in a cool, dark place that is easily accessible to family members. Be sure *everyone* in the family knows the location.
- **Storage time frame:**  
Rotate your water supply every six months. Be sure to date new water when it is placed in storage.



### Hidden Water Sources in Your Home

If water or sewer lines break in your area, shut off the incoming water valve to your house immediately. Water already in the pipes in your home can be used unless it is already contaminated. To use the water, let air into the plumbing by turning on a faucet in the highest level of your home. Go to the lowest faucet in the house, and turn it on to obtain the usable water.

Other sources of water in your home include:

- your hot water tank;
- ice maker/ice trays;
- water stored in the freezer and/or refrigerator; and
- water in the reservoir tank of your toilet (use as a last resort).



To use the water in the hot water tank, be sure the electricity or gas is off. Open the drain at the bottom of the tank and turn off the water intake valve. Turn on a hot water faucet, and the water will begin to flow. If at all possible, do not drain all the water from the tank. If in doubt about water's safety, purify all water used for drinking, food preparation, and hygiene. There are many ways to purify water. The publication referenced below provides detailed information.

Adapted from University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service fact sheet *Preparing for a Water Emergency* (ENRI-215), available through your county Extension office or online at [www.ca.uky.edu/enri/pubs/enri215.pdf](http://www.ca.uky.edu/enri/pubs/enri215.pdf)

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For more information, contact your county Extension office or visit the Kentucky Extension Disaster Education Network Web site, Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, College of Agriculture, University of Kentucky, at [www.wagwx.ca.uky.edu/EDEN](http://www.wagwx.ca.uky.edu/EDEN).

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