

Water Storage and Treatment

Storing water

An important part of emergency preparedness is ensuring that you have enough water for each member of your household for 14 days. Buying water from the store is one option. Another option is to store water in your own containers.

Making sure the water is properly stored is the next step.

Store-bought water is fine as is, as long as it's not opened until needed. Be sure to look for containers that are sturdy, as not all containers are created equal, and flimsy containers will be more prone to leaking over time.

The key to storing water in your own container is to make sure that [the container is properly sanitized](#), as well as any other tools or objects used while sanitizing and filling your container. "For example," says Bonny Cushman from the Regional Water Providers Consortium, "When I filled my two 55 gallon containers I washed them and sanitized them – and then I made sure that my potable water hose and outdoor spigot were also sanitized. I made sure to wash my hands and also sanitized the container's tops."

According to Cushman, as long as you're careful to sanitize everything carefully and if your water comes from a local municipality, there's no need to treat the water that goes into your container. It is already treated by your water provider.

It's generally recommended that water is switched out every six months to a year, but with larger containers that can be time consuming and a bit challenging. The good thing is that water, unlike food, doesn't go bad. It just may not taste fresh if it has been stored for a long time.

Cushman tells about one water provider who did a test with several stored barrels and found that the water quality was good even after it had been stored for a few years. But, she added, if you have any concerns about the quality of your emergency water you can treat it or filter it before use.

For more information about storing water, the Regional Water Providers Consortium has a whole section on [emergency water storage](#) on their website.

Treating water

It's a good idea to have at least one way to treat water on hand so that you could treat your stored water before using it if you had any question about its safety or quality. The

Regional Water Providers Consortium has [step-by-step instructions](#) on how to treat water in a variety of ways.

Emergency sources of water

In addition, there are other potential sources of water around your home that you can utilize if necessary. Water heaters and water pipes are two such sources. The Regional Water Providers Consortium has instructions on how to access that water, as well as other means of locating [emergency sources of water](#).

This article was created with contribution from Bonny Cushman, Program Coordinator at the Regional Water Providers Consortium.