

Preparedness Newsletter: March 2025

Topic: Water

March Action Steps

- 1) Determine how much water your household will need to survive 30 days.
- 2) Make a plan - how you will either get or store the water.
- 3) Purchase any needed supplies and if you are storing water for the first time, set a 6-month reminder to check your supply for drinkability.

Water – why is it so darned important?

We need water to survive beyond a few days. Besides drinking, water is needed for many food preparations, as well as medical needs such as cleanliness and wound disinfection. Supply lines may be ruptured in an earthquake, power loss will disable pumps, and it may be days before any emergency systems can become operational. We strongly recommend that you store at least three days of water for your household, regardless your long-term sourcing plans. One way to do that inexpensively is with 5-gallon water jugs, available at many stores locally.

Three ways to obtain water:

- 1) Use what you have in your house.
- 2) Natural springs – many exist on the Island.
- 3) Store water, either 30 days' worth, or less in combination with #1 and #2, above.

Overview

- The CDC recommends we store 1 gallon/person/day. Don't forget your pets!
- Pool and hot tub water may contain elevated levels of chlorine, metals, and bacteria. It's not generally recommended for drinking, so find another use or treat it (filter and sanitize). City tap water does not need anything added to it before it is stored because it has already been treated and should have a chlorine residual.
- Commercially purchased water does not need anything added to it. Keep it in its original sealed container for up to 2 years or whenever the manufacturer states.
- Boiling water kills bacteria, viruses and parasites that can cause illness. Household bleach can be used to purify water if it is not expired, contains 6 percent sodium hypochlorite, and has no thickeners, soaps, or scents.
- Lastly, all household members should know how to shut off the water at the main house valve so that you don't lose clean water which you could use due to gravity.

Getting your water – each method has its pros and cons

1. Use what you have in your house

Great sources include your water heater(check the label for capacity), and toilet tanks. If you have a well you take from the pressure tank, and you can dip water manually from the well. Other sources also include swimming pools and hot tubs although they may need treatment before consuming.

Pros	Cons
Easy, minimal planning	Older heaters may contain debris Unsecured heaters could fall over in an earthquake Well access might take some equipment Pool and hot tub water might need extra treatment Big family? Will it be enough?

Conclusion: With minimal preparation, this is a great source of water.

2. Obtain from a local spring or creek or utilize roof runoff.

There does not seem to be any official listing of natural springs on the Island, but if you live near one it could be a good water source. Just remember that many deer carry Giardia, an intestinal parasite, and the longer that spring water is above the surface, the more pollutants it may pick up. You will need a means to capture and store the water, as well as some basic treatment of filtration and sanitation.

Pros	Cons
There appear to be many springs on the Island Avoids having to store water if you have limited room for storage	Could you find a spring now? Could you capture and treat the water? Earthquakes can disrupt location and flow Spring water should be filtered and treated May be difficult if you are injured, cold, tired, etc. Roof runoff needs a collection drum and means of disposing of the initial flush.

Conclusion: With proper preparation and some luck, this is a viable option

3. Store water on site

Again, we recommend you store at least three days' worth of water for your household, regardless of how you plan to secure water long-term. Given how key a clean water source is to survival, you may wish to store more to guarantee you have it.

Pros	Cons
Water is available NOW Even a few gallons give you time to source other water if that's part of your plan Guaranteed clean and sanitary. Intestinal illnesses can be devastating.	You have to wrangle some large drums, or a lot of small containers. Containers have to be cleaned, and the water refilled on a regular basis. Sanitizer dosing can be confusing.

Conclusion: The most guaranteed source of water but takes some work. However, even if you decide to use household water or spring water, you should store about three days's worth of water to help you get started.

For quite a bit more information, see the following attachments:

Water Storage

Water Filtration

Water Sanitization

Useful Links

Prepare in a Year – For the above topic look at month 3

<https://mil.wa.gov/asset/5f171cc0a935f>

CDC – Making Water Safe in an Emergency

<https://www.cdc.gov/water-emergency/about/index.html>

Using your hot tub water in an emergency

<https://olympichottub.com/4-ways-to-use-your-hot-tub-water-in-an-emergency/>

LifeStraws – easy and portable – carry in your backpack, purse or car

https://www.amazon.com/LifeStraw-Personal-Camping-Emergency-Preparedness/dp/B006QF3TW4/ref=sr_1_3?

P&G Purifier Packets – one pack treats 10 liters – note 3 year shelf life

https://www.amazon.com/Purifier-Packets-12-Pack-Purification-Powder/dp/B07PZ27TW6/ref=asc_df_B07PZ27TW6/?