

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

## Handy Household Tips on Drinking Water

### BEFORE an Emergency:

**Be prepared to be self sufficient for 72+ hours.**

- Learn how to operate shut-off valves to water lines, water heater and how to remove any covers. Keep tools handy. Mark valves and covers with fluorescent paint or tape to locate in the dark.
- Brace, strap, or anchor the water heater.
- Store 3+ gallons of water/person and additional water for pets. Replace commercially bottled water by the expiration date. Any water treated with unscented bleach should be replaced after six months.
- KEEP —extra water in all vehicles
  - unscented chlorine bleach or water purification tablets on hand
- Do not add coloring/disinfecting products to toilet tank (a source of emergency water).
- Store food and water away from household cleaners or contaminants.

### AFTER an Emergency:

- Check local news or with local water agency to find out whether your tap water is safe before you drink or wash with it.
- Check pipes for leaks/breaks. If necessary, shut off main water valve to prevent contamination.
- Check if sewage lines are intact. If necessary, plug bathroom sink/drains to prevent backup.
- Avoid using food or water that may have been contaminated by untreated water (i.e. broken water/sewer/gas line, flood, etc.).
- Don't use pool/spa water as drinking water.

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

## Handy Household Tips on Drinking Water

Keep these earthquake preparedness tips as a handy reference in the event of an emergency that could affect your ability to receive tap water.

### Emergency drinking water sources:

- Stored drinking water
- Hot water heaters hold 30 – 60 gallons of water. Turn off electricity or gas to water heater before draining into containers.
- Toilet reservoir tanks
- Melted ice cubes or juices in canned vegetables

### How to disinfect water for drinking:

1. Strain water through a coffee filter, clean cloth or handkerchief to remove debris or sediment.
2. Then, do **ONE** of the following:
  - Boil water rapidly for 1 minute
  - Add water purification tablets as instructed
  - Add unscented chlorine bleach
    - 4 drops bleach per 1 quart water
    - ¼ teaspoon bleach per gallon water
3. Let stand 30 minutes before using

Other good emergency information sources:

Preparedness: [readysandiego.org](http://readysandiego.org)

Emergency news: [sdcountyemergency.com](http://sdcountyemergency.com)

Recovery: [sdcountyrecovery.com](http://sdcountyrecovery.com)

Essential community services info: **dial 211**



San Diego County  
Water Authority

This information is being provided by the San Diego County Water Authority and its 24 member agencies

[sdcwa.org](http://sdcwa.org)