

Water Preparedness

Hurricane and Emergencys

- Pure Water Sources
- How to Purify Water
- Storing Purified Water



WATER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES WHAT TO DO & HOW TO DO IT!

During an emergency or disaster, the water supply to your home may be cut off or undrinkable due to contamination from broken pipes. You and your family may be on your own to provide a safe and adequate water supply for consumption until service can be restored. If water service has been interrupted or an announcement has been made stating that the water supply is contaminated and not safe to drink, your water should be shut off at your cut-off valve. Make sure everyone in your home knows where this valve is located. It is normally located under a water faucet, 18 inches in the ground and 2 feet from the house, in line with your water meter. The cut-off valve may be operated from time to time to provide water, if available for sanitary services only.

PURE WATER SOURCES

Water may be obtained from: ice cubes, your hot water tank, your toilet tank (not bowl) and canned goods. Be sure to turn off gas or electricity, if not already off, to the hot water tank before draining off water for emergency use. The water valve to the hot water tank should also be turned off. Rain water can be collected and purified as outlined below.

HOW TO PURIFY WATER

BOILING - Boil vigorously for 3 to 5 minutes.

PURIFICATION TABLETS - Purchase from drug store, follow directions

HYPOCHLORITE BLEACH - Liquid household bleach can be used. It must contain Hypochlorite, preferably 5.25%. Use 8 drops per gallon of water. (Do not use granular bleach, it is poisonous!) Bleach should not be over 6 months old. Let stand for a minimum of 30 minutes before using.

TINCTURE OF IODINE - Same as bleach. If you must use toilet tank water, boil before using. Do not use chemically treated "blue" water. (Be careful! Most gadgets that claim they purify water are designed for microbiologically safe water only.) If water contains solids, strain water through paper towels, coffee filters or several layers of clean cloth into a container to remove any sediment or floating matter, then boil.

STORING PURIFIED WATER

To keep water safe from contamination, it should be stored in clean, non-corrosive, tightly covered containers. Use 1/2 or 1 gallon containers, preferably made of heavy opaque plastic with screw on caps. Clearly mark containers with current date and use or discard within one year. Empty household bleach bottles are good if clearly labeled, to contain water. There is usually enough bleach left in an empty bleach bottle to purify the water when you fill and store it. **CAUTION:** Children should not identify bottles which normally contain a hazardous substance as a container for pure drinking water. Plastic milk bottles are another alternative, but this type of container should not be your first choice. They are very difficult to wash clean.

STORE CONTAINERS IN A COOL, DARK LOCATION

To increase shelf life of water, group bottles in dark plastic trash bags to keep light out. Prepare two quarts of water per day for each family member and any family pets. A family of four will need at least 28 gallons of pure water for a two-week supply. Inspect containers every six weeks for leaks or any other undesirable conditions that may have developed. If stored water tastes flat, it probably lacks air. To aerate, simply pour the water from one container to another three or four times. **NOTE:** Do not use swimming pool water for drinking purposes unless boiled, as it can cause diarrhea. Use only after

other sources of pure water are exhausted. Do not use water stored in waterbeds. Vinyl plastic releases undesirable chemicals into the stored water. Keep a battery powered radio with spare batteries on hand for use in case of a general power outage for information about the availability of water in your area. www.charlestoncpw.com

How to protect your plumbing during freezing weather

When the temperature outside falls below 32 degrees Fahrenheit:

- Allow an outside faucet to drip slightly.
- Insulate all exposed pipes and enclose crawl spaces.
- Plug up drafty cracks and repair broken window panes.
- Remove hoses from outside faucets and be sure they are drained and shut off.
- Know how to turn off your water at the shut-off valve in case of an emergency.
- Keep meter box lids closed to prevent cold air from freezing at the water meter.

Take these precautions if you go out of town during freezing weather:

1. Turn off your water at the main valve or at the meter.
2. Turn off your hot water heater at the electric breaker panel.
3. Open a couple of faucets in the house to allow water sitting in the pipes to expand if the outside temperature is freezing.

Hurricane Preparedness

Are you ready for the Summer 2002 Hurricane Season?

During and after a hurricane, the water supply to your home can become contaminated and unfit to drink. To ensure your household has a safe and adequate water supply after natural disasters, take these precautions:

- Store enough drinking water for each family member and pet.
- Store in clean, noncorrosive, tightly covered containers.
- Store containers in a cool, dark location.
- Collect water in bathtubs for non-drinking uses.

As soon as landfall is imminent or evacuation notices are issued during a hurricane warning, you can further protect the water supply going into your home and minimize property damage by following the guidelines shown below:

How to protect your hot water heater

- Turn off your water at the meter.
- Switch off the electrical circuit breakers.

How to turn off your water meter

Your water can be shut off at either the cut-off valve or at the water meter. Everyone in your home should know where these are located. The valve (usually with a wheel-type

handle) is normally under the water faucet outside, 18 inches below the ground and 2 feet from the house.

It will be in line with your water meter, which is usually located near the edge of your property line near the street. The valve can be operated to provide water, if available, for sanitary services only.

To have water for non-potable uses

- Fill up the bathtub.
- Use the water in the hot water heater.

How to purify water

A "Boil Water" notice may be issued after a storm because the water has become unsafe to drink due to pipes breaking. If this occurs, you'll want to have a safe and adequate drinking water supply in your home until service can be restored.

To do this you'll need to purify the water by using one of several methods:

BOILING

Boil vigorously for 3 to 5 minutes and let cool. You can add a pinch of salt, or pour back and forth between two containers to improve the taste.

HYPOCHLORITE BLEACH

- **Liquid** bleach from the home laundry or grocery store will work well. DO NOT use a bleach that has a fragrance or scenting agent, like a lemon scent.
- Read the label to find the percentage of chlorine available. It should be 5.25%.
- Add 8 drops to a gallon of water and let stand at least 30 minutes. (1 teaspoon = approx. 100 drops.) If no dropper is available, use 1/8 tsp.
- If the water has a strong chlorine smell after 30 minutes, pour back and forth between two clean jugs or containers.

PURIFICATION TABLETS

Purchase from drug store, follow directions.

How to store purified water

- To keep drinking water safe from contamination, it should be stored in clean, non-corrosive, tightly covered containers.
- Prepare two quarts of water per day for each family member and any family pets.
- To increase shelf life of water, group bottles in dark plastic trash bags to keep light out. Store containers in a cool, dark location.
- CAUTION: Make sure children don't mistake bottles containing hazardous substances with bottles used for drinking water.