



## Emergency Drinking Water

### Hidden Water Sources in Your Home

If an earthquake or disaster occurs and you do not have enough stored clean water, you can use the water in your **hot-water tank, pipes, and ice cubes**. A hot water tank typically has **about 30 to 50 gallons of water**. You should not use water in the toilet tank, toilet bowls, radiators, waterbeds, or swimming pools/spas because of bacteria and chemicals.

Do you know the location of your **incoming water valve**? You may need to shut it off to prevent contaminated water from entering your home if you hear reports of broken water or sewage lines or a failure at the water treatment plant.

To use the **water in your pipes**, shut off the incoming water valve. Let air into the plumbing by turning on the faucet in your house at the highest level. A small amount of water will trickle out. Then obtain water from the lowest faucet in the house.

To use the water in your **hot-water tank**, be sure that plumbing fixtures and the water heater are not submerged by flood waters. Turn the electricity or gas off and turn off the water intake valve. Start the water flowing by opening the drain at the bottom of the tank and turning on a hot-water faucet. Do not turn on the gas or electricity when the tank is empty. If gas is turned off, do not attempt to turn it back on yourself. A representative from the gas company should do that to ensure safety.



Water is the most important resource you need to survive after an earthquake. Store and rotate **at least four cases of bottled water in your home, two in the trunk of your vehicle, and two at your work or day location**. You will be prepared no matter where you are when the disaster strikes. Many large stores carry cases of six 1 gallon bottles of water good for at least two years. Have one of these for every person in the household and extra for pets and guests. Without enough water most people will dehydrate and may not survive. You will need enough water to get through at least one week following an earthquake or emergency. One gallon of water per person per day is the rule, and extra for pets and visitors.



### Ways to Treat Water for Safe Consumption

**Boiling** – This is the safest process to treat water in a post disaster period. Use a large pot or kettle, boil water for at least one minute after boiling process begins. Allow to cool before drinking.

**Chlorination** – Use household liquid bleach that contains 5.25 to 6.0 % of sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented or color safe bleaches, or those with added cleaners. Because the potency of liquid bleach diminishes, use only bleach from a newly opened or unopened bottle. Use 16 drops (1/8 teaspoon) of liquid bleach per gallon of water, stir, and let stand 30 minutes. The water should have a slight odor of bleach. If not, repeat the dosage and process and let stand another 15 minutes. If no smell of bleach, discard the water and find another source.

**Emergency Filtration** – Consider purchasing emergency water filters. You can keep one at home, one in your vehicle, and one at the office. Water purification tablets are another option.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) web page has more information on emergency water: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/preparedness/kit/water/>

For more information on Emergency Preparedness for Alameda County residents, neighborhoods, and business facilities contact the Alameda County Sheriff's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Services at 925-803-7996 or email [phess@acgov.org](mailto:phess@acgov.org) View our preparedness web site at: [ready.acgov.org](http://ready.acgov.org)